

## **Dr. Elaine Phillips, OT History, Lit., and Theology, Lecture 19**

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Let's try that again, good morning. Thank you. Well we do want to get started. I'm delighted that you are all bravely swimming through the weather today. The announcements are fairly straightforward, I've already had a couple of you say that there have been grading errors on your exams, so please do indeed let me know if that's the case. I've said it again, I've said it before, and I'll say it again, we're human beings and we make mistakes. The TA's are under a little pressure because I tell them I'd like them to get it done quickly, so there's always that tension and I make my own share of mistakes as well. So if there are problems please by all means let me know and we can rectify that. There also seems to be some confusion in terms of when this one page paper that you're writing is due. And so it is indeed Monday the 7<sup>th</sup> of November, so check your materials on Blackboard, that's what it says on the syllabus and that is indeed what we're going with. I will say more about that probably in the next couple of weeks but as I said last time, you know it's a good idea to get started on it now. Get some sort of a sense in terms of what it is that you need to do for that, because the last thing you want to do is try and write it quickly. I will know if you tried to write it quickly, believe me, it'll be very clear given the nature of the assignment. Does that sound really mean and nasty? Sorry about that.

At any rate, we're not going to sing today. Yeah, next time. But in anticipation of the fact that we're fairly quickly going to be studying David, in other words we're going to be studying David next time, and also because one of the most wonderful Hebrew songs that we can sing is based on Psalm 51 or part of it, I thought it might be good for us to read through at least parts of Psalm 51. It's a wonderful psalm. If we go with the psalm titles, you know those fine print things right at the top of each psalm, this is indicative of the fact that this is David's psalm of repentance after he was caught in his sin with Bathsheba and resultant murder of Uriah as well. So it's the song of a broken heart and a broken spirit,

which is always a good place to be when we've previously been in a rebellious state and sinning against the Lord. If you've got your Bibles, please feel free to follow along with me, I will read a fairly significant part of this, and then we'll pray together and then we'll get started.

“Have mercy on me, O God,  
according to your unfailing love;”

And the word there is *hesed*, we have been introduced to *hesed* over and over again, most recently last time.

“according to your unfailing *hesed*;  
according to your great compassion  
blot out my transgressions.

Wash away all my iniquity  
and cleanse me from my sin.”

I'm willing to bet every one of us this morning needs to be praying that prayer. We haven't necessarily been in David's position, but every one of us I think probably needs to make that prayer our heart's prayer. Let's keep going.

“For I know my transgressions,  
and my sin is always before me.  
Against you, you only, have I sinned  
and done what is evil in your sight,  
so that you are proved right when you speak  
and justified when you judge.  
Surely I was sinful at birth,  
sinful from the time my mother conceived me.  
Surely you desire truth in the inner parts;  
you teach me wisdom in the inmost place.  
Cleanse me with hyssop”

You may remember as we were studying some of the things of Passover and Torah in general that hyssop was that little branch of stuff that they dipped and sprinkled with. “Cleanse me with hyssop” has strong symbolic overtones.

“Cleanse me with hyssop,  
and I will be clean;  
wash me,  
and I will be whiter than snow.  
Let me hear joy and gladness;  
let the bones you have crushed rejoice.”

If you’ve been or are in a position where your heart is just breaking under the weight of guilt and sin you know what this prayer is about.

“Let me hear joy and gladness.  
Hide your face from my sins  
and blot out all my iniquity.”

And then the next three verses are the ones we are going to learn to sing together and probably you know them already if you’ve grown up in this context.

“Create in me a pure heart, O God,  
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.  
Do not cast me from your presence  
or take your Holy Spirit from me.”

We’re going to find out that David saw that happen to Saul, and he saw the horrifying effects in Saul’s life when the Holy Spirit left Saul, and his prayer is not coming out of some intellectual cerebral context. He’s seen it happen.

“Do not cast me from your presence  
or take your Holy Spirit from me.  
Restore to me the joy of your salvation  
and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.”

And then I’ll skip down to verse 17.

“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;  
a broken and contrite heart, O God,  
you will not despise.”

Let's take some time to pray together.

*Oh merciful God, as we pray David's prayer with him, we're mindful that you are the source of our cleaning up. And so we're thankful that in the person of Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God, suffering savior, loving redeemer, we're clean and we know joy again. And Father we would pray for one another this day that we would know that sustaining presence. And we pray that as a result our lives would be a beacon of light not just to those around, those here, but beyond these walls. Father, we ask that your church, in a world that's torn apart by darkness, by murderous intents, by horrifying acts of brutality, we pray for the safety and the preservation of your church, but also that it would indeed be a light to those around. Help us to be faithful to pray toward that end, Father. We pray for those in our midst who are ill, that you would bring restoration. We pray for those whose hearts are troubled, by guilt or anxiety or distress, bring the tender and powerful healing presence of your spirit. Father, may we together, as your children, come to you with great thanksgiving, remembering that you are indeed the source of all goodness for us. We thank you for this, we thank you for this truth, and we ask for your blessing. I pray for your help as I teach, and may we learn together in ways that will indeed prepare us to be children in Your kingdom. We pray this in Christ's name. Amen.*

Just a review question before we pick up and talk about what we're going to talk about for today. I think you all know the answer to this. At the end of the book of Judges, what was the common refrain? “And there was no king in Israel, everyone did what was right in their own eyes.” This sets the stage, as I said last time repeatedly for the transition to the monarchy. It's not an easy transition. And if you read chapters 1 through 15 of 1 Samuel you know that there are some stresses that these people are going to undergo and we want to spend some time

thinking about how this all works out. Obviously our major figures in the transition are going to be Samuel, but we'll have a lot to say about how Samuel gets to Samuel's place and what he does there, and then there is also going to be Saul as well. We'll get started on Saul, we'll talk about the ascendancy of Saul and his move to becoming king, and then we're going to see the disastrous effects of Saul's self-centeredness, in terms not only of him but also in terms of his kingdom at large. So that's the direction we're going. As always, we need to get kind of a sense of geo-politics, and we're going to do this first with a list, and I'll kind of talk our way through the important parts of this list of items. And then there'll be a map forthcoming so we can see how that all works out.

I don't need to say much about the first one. That same cycle that we saw in the period of the Judges with people apostatizing, worshipping other gods, worshipping themselves. It just continues, they were human beings and they kept sinking into those kinds of traps, that same thing is going to happen. Therefore God is going to do the same kinds of things because God keeps his covenant, and we must never forget that. God keeps his covenant, and part of the covenant is, when his people are disobedient, he brings the means into their lives to restore them, to bring them back, to bring them to repentance. The same thing is going to happen here. Now, the people that he uses in this time that we're talking about are going to be the ones that I've noted. First of all, Philistines, and once we start looking at the map we're going to see that the Philistines aren't just out there on the coastal plain any more. Yes they still are there, that's their home base, but like most geo-political entities, they're not necessarily content to stay there, and we're going to see some areas where, as I note for you at the end, they pretty much penetrate into the heartland of the tribe of Judah and into the heartland of then northern part of the country, and they are a real threat. They are a real threat to the actual existence of the people of God.

We're going to look at these five Philistine cities on the map in a moment, the cities that are on the coastal plane area. The other thing to keep in mind, and

we learned this from 1 Samuel 13 as I note, and if you've read it you've seen it already, they control the production of iron. It says the Israelites had to go down to the Philistines to get their tools sharpened,. Two things I want you to think about. First of all, that's humiliating, they know they're inferior to the Philistines who are their overlords. Secondly, if you don't get an impact of how significant that is, put it into contemporary terms. If you pay attention to politics, you and I are a little concerned who has and who has not got nuclear armaments, right? It's the same kind of thing. The Philistines had that military power and exceedingly big military advantage with iron for their weapons. Just as certain countries have nuclear arms and others do not, it creates an incredible power imbalance. So the Israelites are going to feel this, and they are going to feel it rather strongly.

Another thing we want to make a note of. Even though the Philistines are out there as the major threat, and they're going to continue to be, we've seen them with Samson, it's going to go on into our period today. Saul, when he becomes king, first takes on some Ammonites. Where are the Ammonites located? Think map. There's the Mediterranean Sea, here's the Jordan River. Across the Jordan River, Ammonites are in that particular area, they're going to be just sort of north and east of Moab. So they're across what should have been a fairly significant boundary, but on the other hand, they're going to create some issues, especially for tribes that are living east of the Jordan Valley. Just a reminder, who are those tribes that are east of the Jordan Valley? Not Benjamin. Do you remember my wonderful Rabbinic proverb? What a person who studies and forgets what they have studied is like? Do you remember that? A woman who gives birth to a child and goes out and buries it. So, keep in mind those marvelous things you've studied. That's a footnote.

Let's come back to those tribes that are across the Jordan. They happen to be Reuben, Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh. So we've got Israelites over there, and Saul will initially take on the Ammonites as he's working on behalf of his people. Amalekites, they're also here, and I won't ask you where they're

located, because it's a little more difficult. They are the people that kind of wander around. They made life miserable for Israel as they were coming out of Egypt, way back when in the time of the Exodus and they're continuing to be a thorn in Israel's flesh. Not only with Saul, but with David and well beyond that as well. So the Amalekites are there, used by God to be a little bit of a prod to a disobedient Israel. Moab and Edom also to the east, in this case of the Dead Sea for Moab, and to the southeast of the Dead Sea for Edom. These become at least enemies of the Israelites as this period unfolds. We have Saul who will take on them as well.

When you stop and think about where Israel is located, we'll look at a map in a moment, and I said this last time, but I'll say it again, they are going to settle in relatively small little villages in that central mountain hill country area. They don't go out and take out these big cities on the coastal plane. They don't get the cosmopolitan areas. They are going to be newly settled in villages in the hill country and they're going to be vulnerable. They've got the potential for excellent agricultural produce, and we talked about geography, we talked about the fruit of the land, the grain, and the new wine and the olive oil. That new wine and oil comes out of the hill country area. Don't think for a moment that the Philistines don't want their claws on that.

That's our geo-political context, let's get a picture of the map. For those of you in the back, there's going to be some arrows forthcoming. I'm guessing you can see, or at least I'm hoping that you can see, this line right here, that's Philistine plain. That is indeed a plain. The five cities are going to locate around that plain area. We're going to have a central core of where the Philistines are located. So there are three that are on or near the coast. There's Gaza, we located some of these last time in regards to Samson, and we're just reminding ourselves now. Gaza, the southernmost of the Philistine cities on the coast. Ashkelon comes next. Moving up the coast it's Gaza, Ashkelon, slightly inland is going to be Ashdod. By the way, these are cities that I asked you to memorize, so know them. You can always learn them because there are two A's, two G's, and an E if that

helps at all. Any kind of device like that. Then we're going to move north and inland just a little ways, and there's Gath--Philistine Gath. These locations are important in terms of the stories you've been reading and will continue to read. I'll actually show you pictures of some of them as time unfolds. And then finally, after Gath, comes Ekron. Now, the Philistines are not content to stay in those five cities. That's their Pentapolis, a league of five cities.

But guess what? As I said a moment ago, they're going to be pressing north, they're going to be pressing east. Because pressing east means pressing into this hill country which is where our Israel settlements are which is tempting territory for all of the agricultural reasons we've mentioned. Got that so far? As they press north, one more thing with regard to this map, I don't have an arrow for this but my pointer is located at a place called Aphek, Aphek is going to be significant, and I'll just give a geographical tidbit. Going west from Aphek is a river. It's called the Arkon river, don't worry about it, but it means that anybody who is coming through this area for military purposes or for commercial purposes, has to go between Aphek right here and the hills right there. That's a bottleneck. It's a funnel place. Whoever controls Aphek has a remarkable ability to kind of control what's going on. So don't be surprised when you see the Philistines going up to Aphek and the Israelites getting a little nervous and coming out to beat them up, or try to. They don't succeed, because that's what's going on here.

Alright, let's carry on a little bit. I said a moment ago that the Philistines are not content to stay in their Pentapolis, so let's look at some of our major threats. That tan brown area on the map is the area that is pretty much settled by the Israelites. The rest of it's not, but this is our area settled by Israelites right here. A few little enclaves up in here but primarily there. 1 Samuel 13 and 14, we'll look at some details of this, although not all of it, in a moment. But in 1 Samuel 13 and 14 you see the Israelites where our little gold ellipses are right here. Just think about it for a moment. What have they done when they are up here in the tribal area of Benjamin. They've come really close to slicing this country in half at that



point. Now we're going to pick up a little on that story later on, but don't think for a moment that this is not a vital threat to the existence of Israel. Because here they are, Philistines, and they're fighting Philistines and Israelites in this whole area. They're really close to Saul's hometown, and by this time Saul is king. He ought to be nervous. His son Jonathan is going to be involved in a really dramatic attempt to get rid of Philistines who are right there. So see that as one major, major move into Israelite territory.

Secondly, in 1 Samuel 17 is our famous David and Goliath story, the one you all know from Sunday school and flannel graph and all those other good things that happen. Because David, little David, is fighting the giant Goliath. But here is where it happens. Let me again explain our geography. The Elah Valley, right about in here is one of a series of valleys that move from the coastal plain area up into the hill country. Now just use your logic, if you will, if you're trying to be a Philistine and you want to get into this area that I've just said is so remarkably fruitful, you're going to take the easiest way in. And that means, the valleys, an east-west valley, and the Elah Valley is one of them. It is going to be a perfect avenue. You just charge right in there and you go up in the hill country and do what you want to do. So when it says that the Philistines are encamped, and it tells us where, between Socoh and Azekah the Elah Valley. The Israelites are on the other side of the valley, we know exactly where it is. We can see that this is an extremely important time for Israelite defenses. If they can't win this battle, who's going to get it next?

Right at the end of this white ellipse right here is the town of Bethlehem. It's no accident that David's dad sent David down to this battleground to see what was going on, because he knew that if the Israelites lost, he and his people, the tribe of Judah and Bethlehem, were next in line. By the way, all of David's brothers are down there fighting too. So, significant events are happening.

Then our third time, at the end of the book of Samuel, we haven't gotten there yet but we will next time Lord willing, we have the death of Saul. Saul will

lose his life trying to defend the northern part of the country. He and the Israelites are going to be on Mount Gilboa which is inside my red ellipse. Notice where the Philistines have gotten. They've long since moved beyond the boundaries of their five cities. They've swung past Aphek. They've moved all the way up here, and to all intents and purposes because they've also controlled Bethshan, we'll talk about that Lord willing next time. This means they've cut the country in half. They've cut the country in half.

It's sort of like, make it on a big scale, someone invaded New York City, made a bee line for Chicago and then went right on to San Francisco and made a swath of destruction in between and neither side of country could have any contact with the other. Now I realize that's overstating it a little bit, because we're big, but you get the point. The country is cut in half; the northern tribes have been cut off from the southern tribe. Life is difficult right now for the Israelites. So as you're reading the narratives, try to imagine the situation and let these words come to life for you. I know how easy it is, cause I do it myself, to read those words as if they're sort of behind a stained glass opaque window. You hardly see anything beyond it. But they're real words about real narratives and about God's intervention on behalf of real people, who in this case are really vulnerable.

First things first. As I said, our two major figures here are going to be Samuel and Saul. I think we need to talk a little bit about Samuel. His parents come from the hill country of Ephraim, but he's from the tribe of Levi, so he will function appropriately as he moves in eventually to service at the tabernacle. He's from the clan of Kohath. We've seen the whole barren mother phenomenon before. In fact, one of the things we've seen as we looked at each one of these narratives is that God makes it really, really clear that this person who is eventually born is somebody that God is choosing to use. Now of course, we saw it with Abraham and Sarah, we saw it with Isaac and Rebekah, we saw it with Samson's mother. Last time we saw that Samson, designated to be a Nazirite, broke all his Nazirite vows. By way of contrast, Samuel too, will be designated as

a Nazirite by his mother, and he seems to live up to it remarkably, in contrasting way to what we had with Samson.

If you've got your text, let's just read a little bit, as we read about Hannah. Because Hannah is a pretty incredible woman. Life is tough. She doesn't have children. She has as some of these others have had, a rival. Elkanah has another wife, whose name is Peninnah who seems to be able to have children fairly easily. They go regularly to the tabernacle at Shiloh, which tells us that there is a clear sense of devotion to God and to worshipping God in this context. When they're there, Hannah in bitterness of soul prays, verse 10 chapter 1, "O LORD Almighty, if you will only look upon your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son." Now don't just read past the next sentence, "then I will give him to the LORD for all the days of his life." I don't think any of you have children, maybe a few of you do. How easy is it to take that child, especially one you've been waiting for, and just, drop it off at the temple, at the church, at wherever and leave? Yet this is the essence of her devotion to God. She says, "I will give him to the Lord for all of the days of his life." And after he's weaned, she does indeed do that. She takes Samuel to the tabernacle, and that's where he grows up. It's remarkable dedication on her part. Then she adds in as well, "No razor will be used on his head." Which is indicative to us that she is then devoting him as a Nazirite. Do you remember the purpose of the Nazirite vow?--To set somebody apart to do God's work. So I would suggest, prompted by the Holy Spirit, she knows that something big is going to come from this child and she's trusting God indeed to do that, and therefore he's going to be someone set apart as a Nazirite to do the work of God.

As you know the narrative, Eli doesn't actually have a very good idea in terms of what's going on in her head. Because he thinks she's inebriated. He rebukes her for it. She tells him the true story in terms of what's going on. Without even knowing the essence of what her vow was, he says, "Go in peace, may the Lord do for you what you have asked." And indeed she does have a son. As I said

a moment ago, she will, at the end of chapter 1, “So now I give him to the Lord. For his whole life he will be given over to the Lord.” And God in his mercy blesses her with further children as well.

We’re not going to read through the entirety of Hannah’s song. But I want you to notice two things about it. Two things about Hannah’s song. First of all, she emphasizes reversals. The rich, they’re going to be brought down, the poor, lifted up. Then she talks about the importance of what we think of as resurrection. Verse 6, “The LORD brings death and makes alive; he brings down to the Sheol and raises up.” She’s got a powerful sense of what God can do, and what he does do. The second thing that I want you to notice about Hannah’s song is that when Mary, centuries later, in the book of Luke, is singing her heart out to God. So much of it is drawn from the motifs of Hannah’s song. Mary, who is probably younger than you are at this point, knew her scriptures exceedingly well, so that as she sang to God, she sang the scriptures because you see this echoing through Mary’s song, this song of Hannah.

Well, you probably also know, we’re going to come back by the way to the end of chapter 2 in just a moment. But, focusing on Samuel for still a little bit of time, we have Samuel chapter 3, ministering before the Lord and it says, “In those days the word of the LORD was rare.” God wasn’t talking to them very much. Now, he’s going to, once he raises Samuel up, but there’s been a paucity of communication of God, perhaps the heavens have been figuratively shut up because of the disobedience on the part of the people. But now, the Lord calls Samuel. Samuel finally figures out, Eli finally figures out what’s happening and tells Samuel to say, “Lord, I’m listening, please talk.” And the message that comes via Samuel to Eli is a sobering one. Eli’s sons, about whom we’re going to study in just a moment, have been really terribly disobedient. Therefore, they’re going to be taken off the scene. So it’s a message of judgment that comes through at this point. Skipping just ahead a little more, again we’re going to come back momentarily, but at the end of chapter 3, “The LORD was with Samuel as he grew

up, and he let none of his words fall to the ground.” Verse 20, “And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba recognized that Samuel was attested as a prophet of the LORD.” Something for which they’ve been waiting because the word of the Lord has been rare up to this point. Perhaps they weren’t listening very well either. Then if you sneak over to the last passage that I mentioned here, chapter seven, Samuel’s a prophet we’ve already noted that. Verse fifteen says Samuel continued as a judge over Israel all the days of his life, he went on a circuit. You read about the history of United States, there were circuit preachers, circuit riders; they went from this place, to this place, to this place, to preach because there weren’t enough of them around. Well, here you have a circuit judge basically. He goes on a circuit, Bethel think of your map, he goes up there in the hill country, Gilgal, down in the Jordan valley, back up in the hill country and then he always went back to Rama his home town. And there he built an altar to the Lord. If he’s building an altar, offering sacrifices, then we see him functioning and three rather remarkable offices prophet, priest, and a judge. Well that’s our transition figure were not leaving him alone.

For now, we have to move and introduce other events that are taking place--now some pictures. I always forget I have these images. Just to give you a little bit of what Shiloh looks like we’ll look at a map a little bit later to see why this is significant. It doesn’t have all this wonderful, glorious, green stuff that Maine produces, it’s dry up there. That’s the sight of Shiloh right about there. And we’re right about there, right in the central spine area just a little to the east of our hill country. That’s going to be significant from the perspective of the story a forth coming in a moment.

Okay, now let’s move on. The ark is at Shiloh. The first thing we need to do before you talk about moving the ark away from Shiloh, is talk about what’s going on in terms of the religious worship. I’ve called it the abuses of the religious system. Go back to chapter two. Eli’s sons were wicked men,

what did they do wrong, by the way? Let's see, I'm tired of hearing myself talk. What was wrong with Eli's sons? What did they do that was so reprehensible they basically earned the death sentence eventually? Mackenzie [speaks]. Yeah instead of following the prescriptive materials in terms of who gets what and especially the fat portions always going to the Lord always being burned, they just grabbed it with their forks and took out of the cauldron whenever they wanted to have. Whereas in Leviticus, there were specific guidelines in terms of what portions go to the priests, what portions go to the people etc. so it's a complete abuse of God's holy things. And again, we're probably sitting here thinking "eh so what" not realizing how absolutely utterly horrifying this was to abuse something with part of the sacrificial system that was *the* means of coming into a holy God's presence, *the only means* of coming in to a holy God's presence and they've just sitting there grabbing this for themselves and gratifying their own stomachs-that's pretty bad.

What else were they doing wrong? There's one other thing that the text mentions that was equally reprehensible. Max [speaks]. Yeah it says they were sleeping with the women who served at the tent of meeting, the entrance of the tent of meeting. Now, you seem to have and by the way we saw if you read carefully, Exodus a reference to women who are ministering in that way. We seem to have women who are functioning in some way in conjunction with the tabernacle, but Eli's sons are finding another purpose for these women and therefore they are degrading themselves, degrading the women, and that too is abuse of the sanctuary of the holy presence of God and that's going to be something that will as I said a moment ago, earn the whole House of Eli's strong condemnation.

Well not only do they do that in terms of the sons, but you have this interesting episode that begins with chapter four. The ark was the one thing

that kept these people together because the ark was in the sanctuary, the sanctuary where they came and they brought their sacrifices. It was the centering thing. And so even though we have said last time during the judges a lot of desperate tribes nevertheless Shiloh or wherever the ark was at any given point in time, is where they came together. One more thing about Shiloh, it was protected. This is where geography helps us out yet again because it's in the hill country, it's not out close to an area where it will be jeopardized in terms of its safekeeping. Its right up there in hill country take my word for it please. Shiloh was one of the most difficult places to get to in terms of the valley system surrounding it, the rugged territory, you don't just easily go to Shiloh, and you didn't back then either—it's very difficult to get to. It is no accident that they would keep the ark, which is the most precious possession they had, in that very safe place. And so in chapter four, when they're losing the battle against the Philistines, out at Aphek, they've gone out to Aphek to deal with the Philistines when they're losing the battle they have this brainstorm and they say "Let's bring the ark out, it will function kind of like a magic presence." If you know the story, you know they schlep that and it gets captured, but not only have they abused the sacred nature of the ark of the covenant, representative of the presence of God as it says here in chapter four, enthroned between the cherubim--chapter four verse four. Alright they haven't only done that but they've taken it away from a safe location Shiloh was a safe location.

Well let's see what happens with this. What's next? It gets captured by the Philistines doesn't it? Don't miss what the Philistines say as they're working their way through this whole battleground. "What's all the shouting in the Hebrew camp?" they yell and somebody says back "well a god is coming to the camp." The Philistines yell out, "What are we going to do?" That means "Heaven forbid" or something like that. "Be strong Philistines or you could be

subject to the Hebrews. Don't we remember what they did, and what their God did to the Egyptians." They've got a memory, and there's a memory roundabout out here in terms of the God of the Israelites intervening powerfully on behalf of the Israelites against the Egyptians, and they are rightfully scared and yet, because the Israelites have violated the sanctity of the ark they are going to lose it.

Philistines defeated the Israelites, chapter four verse ten. The ark of God was captured, Eli's two sons Hophni and Phineas died. And you have a man from the tribe of Benjamin that runs all the way from Aphek up to Shiloh. Again, think elevation, this is not a track, we're just going around doing a couple miles here and there. They are running uphill, over what I just said about the terrain is some of the most rugged stuff that they could possibly deal with. They're going uphill.

Go ahead. Steven (speaks). It's a great question and I'm going to answer it two ways. Although, of course, I don't know for sure right. There are two possibilities here. First of all is your read on these narratives, there are a number of Israelites who had a very rough time, notably in chapters in thirteen-fourteen, who go over to the Philistines, and you've got Hebrews and are actually because they see Saul as a loser eventually their over with the Philistines. Even David is with the Philistines for a while. So, they probably know what's going on in terms of the whole thought process there. If you don't like that particular understanding then you can say inspiration, but I like the former, one better--great question.

It's captured by the Philistines. Now what happens is one of the most interesting things going in here because during his tenure in the Philistine cities, it isn't just sitting there, what happens? Stephanie (speaks). Right, you've got the Philistine god Dagon, which is the god of fertility alright, and the first time around Dagon just plunk, falls down. The second time after they



set it back up which is an interesting commentary on a god that has to be set back up again, reinstated. But after they set it backup, the second time it falls down and everything is broken off and simply the trunk is there, but what else happens.

Sure there's been that very blatant attack on the god but what else happens to the whole community? Jon (speaks) yeah and what devastation, you're absolutely right (speaks) because a plague breaks out doesn't it? Tumors it says. Most people think that this is something equivalent to the bubonic plague which, as you may know, even though we read of its ravages in Europe and the Middle Ages, it started in the area Saudi Arabia, that's where the whole thing started. And the fact that you've got these horrible tumors and so forth, you got images of rats that are made. We know from our understanding of the bubonic plague, it was the rats who were running back and forth on ships, they transferred this thing.

So anyway, whatever it is, and I think that's a good guess, the Philistines are realizing something much bigger is going on here and so they begin slowly to send the ark back. Let's look at the map, first of all here's Shiloh, and even though the shadowy stuff doesn't give you a whole great sense of topography read rugged, see rugged, see protected. As I said earlier, go out Philistines are at Aphek, capture the ark at Ebenezer where the Israelite camp is. It goes first to Ashdod, centerpiece of this Philistine Pentapolis. But once they've had their fill of whatever this plague is, they begin to move inland Gath and Ekron the next two cities online too get the plague after they get the ark which is getting closer and closer to where the Israelites are. We'll see pictures in a moment.

Finally as we know the men of Ekron say we've had enough of this. How shall we send it back? And their priests and diviners say you need to send it back with a guilt offering. Do you remember what a guilt offering was

for? This takes us back to Leviticus chapter six and seven and the guilt offering was--if the holy things of God has been abused. That's precisely what happened with what the ark has been through these last five months or so. The Philistine diviners know enough to do that, they know enough to send back a guilt offering. In some ways they are much more astute than the Israelites were as they were abusing the sanctity of the ark. At any rate they put it on a cart, as you know the cart is drawn by two cows who just had calves and frankly I know very little about husbandry, animal husbandry, but I understand, if I has a calf and you're a cow, you wouldn't really want to go straight somewhere else, you would want to stay with your little calf. It makes good sense. But the cows, what do they do? They head straight up this Sorek Valley right here not turned to the right not turn to the left they arrive at Beth Shemesh does anyone remember what happened at Beth Shemesh? Right on the border between Philistine control, right here. What happens at Beth Shemesh. Yeah Jonathan (speaks). Yeah Nathaniel (speaks). They do indeed offer the sacrifice and then next line Matt (speaks) Why? Good.

Some of them are punished. Why? The numbers are little bit dicey depending on what version you are reading. Kailyn (speaks) Right – a bunch of them peak up under the cap of the ark. Remember what this is not just your ordinary garden-variety box. So they decide to look into it so here are the Israelites again violating the sanctity of this ark which they've been bereft from for about five months. They just don't get it. Once that happened they get sent to a place called Kiriath Jearim for safekeeping where it's going be for a while. We'll get to see it leaving Kiriath Jearim when David comes along.

That's the journey of the ark and we learned some very important lessons from that prospect as we go along well we need to make tracks just a little bit of a view looking for the edge of the Shephelah area low land area, out toward Gath. Here's our city of Gath, you can see it if you're sitting in

front. That's left, beyond that's coastal plain Mediterranean area. So the ark makes his way down and makes its way to Ekron which is just around the corner if you look at the low slow slope here, if you went down there and went around the corner and right out there is where Ekron is. So you can imagine yourselves standing with a bunch of students, that's one of them there, on this little rise at Beth Shemesh and watching that ark come back up the Sorek Valley during the time of the wheat harvest, as a matter of fact.

Alright we need to carry on. Moving from Samuel to Saul with of course, Samuel's involvement all the way along. Things have been messy for Israel, we've seen evidence of what their choices were in this last narrative. So they're going to ask for a king and you know what they have one good reason. Chapter eight, "When Samuel grew old," I'm in verse 1, "he appointed his sons as judges," but verse 3, "his sons did not walk in his ways, they turned aside after dishonest gain. They accepted bribes and they perverted justice. So the elders of Israel gathered together and said 'you know what, your sons are a real mess. We'd like a king.'"

But what was their real reason for wanting a king it shows up later on? Jess (speaks). Yeah they really want to be like everybody else, so we can have a king like everybody else who will fight our battles. Now just a little tidbit for you, who's the first king? Saul, right, what's his name in Hebrew? That's a nasty one. Shaul which means "asked" as in *you asked for it*. There's probably a pun going on here. He's the one who asked, they got it. And they're going to learn what having a king is like. Samuel warns them, if you look at chapter eight it says starting at verse 11, he's going to take your sons and make them do this, that and the other thing. He's going to conscript them. They're going to serve him; they're going to serve the king. Verse 13, he's going to take your daughters and they're going to be doing all these things for you verse 15, he's going to take a tenth of your grain, a tenth of your flock. Hey taxes are going

to go up and the draft is going to go into effect. Samuel warns them, that's what a king is going to do, but they still want a king. Verse 20 of chapter 8, "but then we will be like all the other nations, with a king to lead us, to go out before us and to fight our battles." That's what they want.

Well, Samuel gives the tiny challenge that I just read, at the end of chapter eight. In chapter twelve he gives a real challenge to them, this of course, is after Saul has been made king. We're going to come back and look at that in a moment, but notice what he says in chapter twelve. He summarizes it for you. Here he reminds them of their own history he reminds them of what God has done for them. They forgot they had a king and that king is God. It's kind of an interesting slap in God's face to say, "we'd like a human king who's going to go out and fight for us" when they have somebody who's been fighting for the faithfully without a break all along.

Well, he rehearses their history and then he says you know what, verse sixteen, "Stand still and see this great thing the Lord is about to do, is it not wheat harvest now? In other words, it's about June, remember our whole thing on weather? It doesn't rain in June. It stops raining usually April-ish or so, I know there's exceptions but generally speaking. "I will call upon the Lord" Samuel says "to send thunder and rain and you will realize what an evil thing you did in the eyes of the Lord when you asked for king." In other words, there will be a miracle in the natural realm or meteorological miracles, they're going to see it, they're going to hear it, they're going to feel it as the rain torrents down on them. That's going to be the little message to them and it says what you've done is a huge mistake. It's a huge mistake and of course, they will know that as they live under the rule of kings for several centuries to come, but here's the big thing, you need to notice what Samuel does. I'm going to read for you starting at verse 20 Samuel says, "you have done an evil thing but don't turn away from the Lord in spite of the fact you're going to get

a king, serve the Lord with all your heart, don't turn away after useless idols. They can't do you any good they can't rescue you, they're useless. For the sake of his great name the Lord will not reject his people because the Lord was pleased to make you his own." Now notice verse 23 if I'd been in Samuel's place, I probably would have slapped my hands together, figuratively, washing them, stalked away, and said, "live with it folks." Samuel isn't that way. He says, "As for me, far be it for me that I should sin against the Lord by failing to pray for you." So Samuel will continue to keep this disobedient rebellious people in his prayers. "I will teach you the way that is good and right," even though they don't really care to learn it he's going to continue to emphasize that. Then verse 24 "be the sure to fear the Lord and serve him faithfully with all your heart. Consider what great things he has done." He is trying to remind them that there has been a covenant God with them every step of way and he will continue to be with them even though they have asked for a different human failure of a king.

Well that brings us to Saul. Saul is a tragic king for a lot of reasons those of you who like to do extra reading of one kind or another may know the name Elie Wiesel anybody read anything by Elie Wiesel, *Night*, have you read *Night*? He's also written a very good book called the *Five Biblical Portraits* and he takes biblical characters and based on his study, this extensive study, because he grew up in the rabbinic background. So he's read all the Midrash and everything on these characters, he really lays them out. One of them is Saul and his treatment of Saul is truly compelling. *Five Biblical Portraits* is in our library. And I encourage you at some point, when you got a break, take an afternoon to read, Sunday afternoon, but as he deals with the character of Saul, we get a feeling for the poignant damage that Saul does to himself and also to others as well.

Given the fact that that's true why did God choose Saul to be king. After

all we've got Genesis 49:10 which says the tribe of Judah will eventually be the tribe from which the king comes what's this business about Saul? What tribe is Saul from?--Benjamin. Splendid. That maybe a tiny bit of a partial sort of like answer. What happened in the tribe of Benjamin in the end of the book of Judges. It was almost wiped out wasn't it? Its reputation was in tatters because of what had happened at Gibeah by the way Gibeah is Saul's hometown interesting little thing there. But because of that, the tribe needed not only to be rebuilt physically, so they find women for the men and so forth and so on. It needs to be rebuilt in other ways as well and this is going to be a way in which the tribe of Benjamin can be sort of resuscitated. It's going to be an important thing, you need to know, we read the narratives of Saul, and we think "oh negative dark counterpoint to David" but if you know Jews today, they'll tell you that there are a fair number of people with the name "Saul." As a matter of fact you know one from the New Testament. Don't you? What was Paul's name? Saul. It was still a name of honor even though as first king, he was really a tragic, tragic failure for a lot of reasons.

Alright. Any other reason why Saul may have been in God's providence the first king? Think of what I said about five minutes ago the meaning of his name. They'd asked for a king, they're going to get the kind of king they asked for. What does Saul look like? He's a head taller than anybody else he stands out in the impressive figure and then ask for somebody with an impressive on the surface to scare off all the enemies etc. etc. They're going to get it.

Let me suggest at least one other reason I'm sure there are others as well. David's still young. In this next period of time when Saul is reigning, and it's going to last a while, there will be a time when David is prepared, he's going to be prepared with very difficult lessons, but he's going to be prepared to be king, but he's not ready yet. Therefore Saul is our intervening person to bring us there.

Well couple things we want to note, and again you can read this narrative chapter 9, parts about the fact that Saul's simply out looking for donkeys. Did you smile when you read that? He's out looking for his father's donkeys and what does he end up with? A kingship. Totally unexpected Samuel will anoint him in a private ceremony. Samuel will say and by the way should you need some confirmation since you seem to be a little surprised by this, the three things are going to happen to you. And those three things do happen. One of those three things is of the Spirit of the Lord is going to come forcefully on Saul and he will prophesy. And it says the Lord changed Saul's heart. This is one of the things we can possibly begin to understand a little bit of Saul. You get an impression that Saul was suffering severely from some kind of emotional, psychological disorder and I don't mean to psychologize Saul and read this in, but he is a truly paranoid person. You see it as the narrative unfolds especially the second half of 1 Samuel and the fact that God changes Saul's heart comes on and powerfully the Spirit and changes his heart--he prophesies. That seems to be totally contrary to what the people around expect, so they say "Oh my goodness, is Saul among the prophets" because it is just beyond their imagination this can happen. It's that powerful coming on of the Spirit that David knew the backhand of it was when the Spirit was removed from Saul and then it will say as we'll see next time, and an evil spirit from the Lord tormented Saul. There is some very horrifying things going on here. Well at any rate, Samuel anoints Saul, Saul goes back, the donkeys are found, no problem.

Then there's this public ceremony where by lot they're going to choose the king. Where's Saul when the public lot choosing takes place? He's hiding in the baggage. He's really afraid not ready to take over this sort of thing, he has to be dragged out there and told "guess what you're king." Interestingly enough, his initial battles are extremely successful, and even the people who

gainsaid him in the end of chapter 10 are now brought around and say “hey” this is good.

I noted for you that there are two things that confirm his being king, don't lose sight of the fact that about the mouth of two witnesses, remember that whole deal, we've got it here again interestingly enough. In spite of these two good things we see a person who really wrestles with his own demons. I've tried to summarize he's impatient, that's going to lead him to counter the words of Samuel directly, he's rash and downright disobedient. First of all, Samuel says wait don't sacrifice but wait for me, I'm coming. Saul waits, but you know what, whatever these Philistines are they're at Geba and Michmash remember that map? They're in the heartland of Israel's territory. You've got to understand the human perspective why Saul is really troubled and why he would be tempted not to wait for Samuel. Because Samuel doesn't show up until the absolute last minute and Saul's faith has wavered at that point.

Then as we read chapter 14 of 1 Samuel, as the battle unfolds that had started at the hand of Jonathan, by the way, we'll see more about that next time of the battle unfolds, Saul had bound his army under an oath not to eat anything. Do you see how dumb that is? You know, I do lots of dumb things myself so I probably shouldn't say it quite like that. But it's foolish- he has an army, fighting is hard work, energy is necessary, but he ordered they can't eat anything. Jonathan doesn't know this because he wasn't there so he has some honey and you may remember as that narrative unfolds Saul says whoever broke this oath is going to die even if it's me or my son, and it turns out to be his son. It's only the intervention of Jonathan's fellow soldiers that spares his life. So we see something very odd, very horrifying if you will.

Just one more thing we want to note, this map is a little fuzzy print. But there's an M and there's a G. That means Michmash and Geba and there's the Philistines. Do you see where they are? They are threatening heartland of



Israel. We're going to pick up with this last thing next time and then will go on to David and Saul

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