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# THE HOLY BIBLE **NKJV** REFERENCE GUIDE

**OLD TESTAMENT**

**BOOK 9**

**1 SAMUEL**



**Hannah Giving Her Son Samuel to the Priest by Jan Victors**

## SUMMARY

Israel's next judge, Samuel, is born to Hannah, a previously barren woman. Hannah gives Samuel to Israel's chief priest, Eli, to be raised as a Nazirite. The priesthood in Israel is in a general state of decline, and Eli's sons are disobeying God's laws.

God declares that he will choose a new priest for Israel from outside Eli's family and begins delivering messages to Samuel as a young man. Samuel becomes a recognized prophet throughout Israel, delivering God's messages to the people.

During battle, the Philistines kill Eli's sons and capture the Ark of the Covenant—Israel's religious altar and symbol of God. Upon learning of the attack and robbery, Eli falls over and dies. The Ark is returned to Israel after it causes its Philistine captors to become terribly diseased. As the nation rejoices, Samuel persuades Israel to set aside its worship of local pagan deities, and God helps Israel thwart Philistine oppression for many years.

The Israelites demand that Samuel appoint a king for them so that Israel will be like other nations. Samuel is displeased, but God grants him permission to elect a king. God notes that by asking for a king, the people have not rejected Samuel; they have rejected God. Samuel warns the people that a monarchy brings certain drawbacks such as taxation, the conscription of armed forces, and the potential for tyranny, but the people are resolute.

God tells Samuel who should be king, and the following day, a man named Saul appears before Samuel, inquiring about some lost donkeys. Samuel pours oil over Saul's head to anoint him as king, and God provides a series of mystical signs to assure Saul that he should be king.

Saul, who is a head taller than the average man, pleases the Israelites as king and leads them in rescuing an Israelite outpost from invasion. Stepping down as Israel's leader, Samuel encourages the people that, so long as they are obedient to God's laws, God will not punish them for requesting a king.

Despite many military victories, Saul soon disobeys God. He tries to rush into battle by performing a ritual war sacrifice without the help of a priest. Later, Samuel sends Saul to fight the Amalekites, instructing Saul to destroy them completely and leave nothing alive. Saul, however, spares the Amalekite ruler and the best portion of their flocks, hoping to present them as sacrifices to God.

Samuel rebukes Saul, claiming that obedience to God's instructions is more important than religious sacrifice. He informs Saul that God will choose another man to be king of Israel. Saul pleads with Samuel, begging for forgiveness. Saul grabs for Samuel's cloak, but the cloth tears—a symbol, says Samuel, of Saul's broken kingdom.

God leads Samuel to the town of Bethlehem to choose a new king from Jesse's family. Each of Jesse's older sons are impressive, but God instructs Samuel to judge people not by their external appearances but, rather, by their hearts.

Samuel anoints Jesse's youngest son, David, a shepherd, as king, and God gives divine power to David. God withdraws his power from Saul, cursing Saul with psychological distress in the form of an "evil spirit". David begins his rise to courtly status as a harp-player for Saul during the king's emotional unrest.

## SUMMARY Continued

The Philistines again threaten to attack Israel, this time taunting Israel with their new hero, Goliath—a giant more than nine feet tall. Saul and the Israelites tremble in fear, but David, arriving to deliver food to his brothers, offers to fight the giant.

Refusing the king's armor, David publicly invokes God's help and kills Goliath with a single stone shot from his sling. The Israelites attack the retreating Philistines, and Israel returns home to the sound of women singing praises of David's victory.

Saul is insanely jealous of David, who becomes an intimate friend of Saul's son, Jonathan, and leads the Israelite troops to many more victories. After attempting to kill David with a spear, Saul sends David on a suicide mission to kill a hundred Philistine men and bring back their circumcised foreskins.

David succeeds, and Saul grudgingly rewards David with his daughter Michal's hand in marriage. Saul orders his household to kill David, but, with the help of Michal and Jonathan, David flees from Saul. David builds an army of unhappy and impoverished Israelites, and he is joined by a priest who is also fleeing from Saul's destructive path.

Saul pursues David into the desert where David spares the king's life twice. While Saul is urinating in a cave, David sneaks up behind him and cuts off a corner of Saul's robe, scorning the opportunity to kill God's "anointed" ruler.

At night, David and his men sneak into the king's tent and steal Saul's spear while he is sleeping. On both occasions, David announces his deed to Saul, and Saul expresses remorse both times, begging for David's mercy.

Still, Saul continues his pursuit, and David takes refuge with the Philistines, who show mercy to the great warrior and adversary of Israel's king. Preparing to fight the Philistines, Saul is wracked with fear and consults a witch, bidding the spirit medium to conjure up the dead spirit of Samuel. Samuel's ghost angrily warns Saul that he and his sons will die fighting the Philistines, ensuring the demise of Saul's kingdom.

David and his men head out to fight the Amalekites, and David succeeds in destroying the warring nation. In the meantime, Saul leads Israel into a losing battle with the Philistines, and Saul's sons, including Jonathan, are killed. Saul commands his armor-bearer to kill him, but the boy refuses, and Saul falls on his own sword and dies.

## NKJV SELECTED SCRIPTURE

**2:2** No one is holy like the Lord, For there is none besides You, Nor is there any rock like our God.

**2:3** Talk no more so very proudly; Let no arrogance come from your mouth, For the Lord is the God of knowledge; And by Him actions are weighed.

**2:6** The Lord kills and makes alive; He brings down to the grave and brings up.

**2:7** The Lord makes poor and makes rich; He brings low and lifts up.

**16:7** But the Lord said to Samuel, "**Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.**"

## NKJV SCRIPTURE Continued

- 17:37** Moreover David said, The Lord, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said to David, Go, and the Lord be with you!
- 17:46** This day the Lord will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you and take your head from you. And this day I will give the carcasses of the camp of the Philistines to the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.
- 17:47** Then all this assembly shall know that the Lord does not save with sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord's, and He will give you into our hands.
- 26:12** So David took the spear and the jug of water by Saul's head, and they got away; and no man saw it or knew it or awoke. For they were all asleep, because a deep sleep from the Lord had fallen on them.

## CHARACTER Definitions

**HANNAH** - The account of Hannah and Samuel is found in 1 Samuel 1 and 2. Hannah was one of two wives of a Jewish man named Elkanah. The other wife, Peninnah, had children, but Hannah was unable to have children.

The Bible's account of Hannah starts before Samuel was born. One year, Hannah traveled to Shiloh where the tabernacle was. At the entrance of the tabernacle, she prayed for a child. She made a vow, saying, "Lord Almighty, if you will only look on your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the Lord for all the days of his life, and no razor will ever be used on his head".

The priest Eli saw Hannah praying intensely but silently and, thinking she was drunk, rebuked her. Once Hannah explained that she was praying, the priest blessed her and asked God to grant her request. She returned home and was able to conceive. Hannah bore a son and named him "Samuel," which means "I have asked for him from the LORD".

Once Samuel was weaned, Hannah and Samuel travel to Shiloh, taking a sacrifice with them. After the sacrifice was offered, Hannah presents the young Samuel to Eli and says, I prayed for this child, and the Lord has granted me what I asked of him. So now I give him to the Lord. For his whole life he will be given over to the Lord. The chapter concludes with Samuel worshiping the Lord at the tabernacle.

Hannah offers a prayer of thanksgiving to God and returns home. It is then revealed that Eli's sons were wicked men who did evil in the tabernacle. In contrast, Samuel was ministering before the Lord, a boy wearing a linen ephod.

Hannah got to see Samuel at least once a year; when she and her husband went up to offer the annual sacrifice, Hannah would always take along a little robe for Samuel. And Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, saying, 'May the Lord give you children by this woman to take the place of the one she prayed for and gave to the Lord.' Then they would go home.

## CHARACTERS Continued

Hannah's story ends with an answer to Eli's prayer. First Samuel says, The Lord was gracious to Hannah; she gave birth to three sons and two daughters. Meanwhile, the boy Samuel grew up in the presence of the Lord.

Hannah's oldest son, Samuel, would go on to become the spiritual leader of Israel. As the prophet and judge of the nation, Samuel would anoint the nation's first two kings, Saul and David.

**ELI** - Eli in the Bible was a Jewish priest living in the days of the judges and serving God at the tabernacle in Shiloh, a city near the hill country of Ephraim. Eli is best remembered for his blessing on Samuel's mother and for his part in Samuel's first prophecy.

Eli had two wicked sons named Hophni and Phineas; they also served in the tabernacle but did not know the Lord. They violated the Law by keeping and eating meat from the sacrifices that was not allocated to them. They also had sex with the women who served at the doorway to the tent of meeting.

The bad behavior of Eli's sons was apparently widely known, and the report came back to Eli. When he found out about these things, he rebuked his sons but failed to make them stop, allowing them to continue to profane the tabernacle.

Apparently, there was some lack of zeal on Eli's part; some part of Eli's heart was with his sons and not with the Lord. We know this because God sent a prophet to Eli to deliver a dire message concerning Eli's household: I will cut short your strength and the strength of your priestly house, so that no one in it will reach old age. What happens to your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, will be a sign to you—they will both die on the same day.

This was a terrible curse, because the Levites depended on the priesthood for their living. Eli's family line would be supplanted by another, more faithful priest: "I will raise up for myself a faithful priest, who will do according to what is in my heart and mind. I will firmly establish his priestly house, and they will minister before my anointed one always".

The priest God raised up was a boy named Samuel, who was dedicated to the tabernacle by his mother, Hannah, a formerly barren woman who had prayed for a child. Hannah spoke her prayer in Eli's presence, and he had blessed her: "Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of him". God answered Hannah's prayer, and she had a son. After Samuel was weaned, she gave him to the Lord's service.

The young Samuel lived in the tabernacle, under the tutelage and care of Eli. Each year, Hannah brought Samuel a linen ephod for him to wear in the house of the Lord. Eli again blessed Hannah and her husband, asking God to give Hannah children to replace the one she had dedicated to the Lord. Hannah eventually gave birth to three more sons and two daughters.

Later, when Samuel was a little older and Eli's eyes were so weak that he could barely see, the Lord Himself spoke to Samuel. In the middle of the night, the Lord "came and

## CHARACTERS Continued

stood” in Samuel’s room and told the young boy to deliver to Eli the message that it was almost time for the prophesied judgment to fall upon his family. Eli humbly accepted God’s decree, and Samuel was confirmed as a prophet of the Lord in Shiloh.

A short time after that, the Philistines came against Israel to attack them. Eli’s sons, Hophni and Phineas, went to battle, and they brought with them the Ark of the Covenant thinking it would guarantee protection against their enemies. However, God was not with them, and Eli’s two sons were killed, along with about 30,000 foot soldiers of Israel.

In addition, the Ark was captured by the Philistines. When Eli heard the bad news, he fell off of his seat, and his neck was broken “for he was old and heavy”. Meanwhile, Eli’s pregnant daughter-in-law, Phinehas’s wife, went into labor; she died during delivery, but not before she named her son Ichabod, saying, The Glory has departed from Israel.

Thus, Eli’s grandson, born on a day of death and defeat, was given a name meaning “No Glory.” Eli had been a priest in Israel and a judge for forty years.

**SAMUEL** - Young Samuel was placed under the care and training of Eli, the priest and judge of Israel at that time. Toward the end of the period of the judges of Israel, the roughly 300 years between Joshua and King Saul, God began preparing a child who would have profound leadership skills and spiritual steadfastness to judge Israel. After Samuel began serving as judge, he continued in this role “all the days of his life”. He also served as a teacher and prophet.

The story of Samuel’s life begins with the very touching scene of Hannah, a wife of Elkanah, praying to God at the tabernacle in Shiloh. She was pleading with God to allow her to bear a son because she was barren. Elkanah was a Levite of the region of Ephraim. His other wife, Peninnah, was able to bear several children, and she made Hannah’s life miserable.

Hannah made a vow to God that if He would allow her to bear a son, she would give the boy to the service of God all the days of his life. Some time passed and God answered Hannah’s prayer. She conceived and bore a son, calling his name Samuel, saying, “Because I have asked for him from the Lord”.

After Samuel was weaned from his mother, he was placed under the care and training of Eli, the priest and judge of Israel at that time. In addition to teaching Samuel about God and His instructions, Eli gave the child Samuel light duties around the tabernacle, such as opening its doors.

It was during this time when Samuel was still a child that God began to speak to him. Samuel’s first message from God was quite sobering and was to be delivered to Eli, the aging leader of Israel. Samuel was to announce God’s punishment on Eli’s two wayward sons, Hophni and Phinehas, who were abusing their priestly authority over the people and desecrating the sacrificial offerings.

God also severely reprimanded Eli for his tolerance of his sons’ behavior. Because of the disrespect shown to God, God told Eli that his descendants would die in “the

## CHARACTERS Continued

flower of their age” and that He would choose another family to serve in the priestly line. The prophecy, “then I will raise up for Myself a faithful priest and he shall walk before My anointed forever”, apparently referred to Zadok.

As Samuel grew and faithfully conveyed messages from God, it became obvious that God was working through him. And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba knew that Samuel had been established as a prophet of the LORD. Samuel was also referred to as a “seer”, another name for prophet.

The people of Israel consulted Samuel on difficult subjects, and the elders trembled before him as the representative of God’s authority. Yet in his great concern for the nation, at times he would be in deep intercessory prayer for them.

At times God had His prophets fulfill additional duties such as anointing future kings and working with them. Samuel was the instrument God used to anoint the first two physical kings of Israel, Saul and then David. Samuel cared for Saul and served as an instructor to him in his early years of kingship.

Later, when Saul overstepped his kingly authority and disregarded God’s commands, God spoke through Samuel to tell Saul that he was rejected as king over Israel. God then sent Samuel to anoint young David to be Israel’s next king. For a number of years David was close to Samuel, able to learn from his guidance and experience.

Another of Samuel’s leadership roles was that of chief judge of Israel after Eli, his predecessor, died. During the period of the judges, a judge was often a military champion or a deliverer that God would appoint to win victories over Israel’s enemies. Some familiar military judges included Joshua, Gideon, Deborah and Samson.

Samuel fulfilled a more general sense of a judge, being a person carefully selected by God for his integrity and skill to decide legal cases for the people. Samuel served as a judge who focused on teaching and administering justice.

A principle that is repeated time and again in the period of the judges can be found when Samuel explains to the people of Israel that they must put away their false idols and faithfully turn their hearts back to God. The ancient Israelites generally forsook their one true Protector and Provider until they faced a crisis.

On one occasion, the Philistines attacked Israel, and 30,000 of Israel’s foot soldiers died. Then God allowed the most holy object in all of Israel, the Ark of the Covenant, to be taken by the Philistines.

Samuel then advised them: If you return to the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the foreign gods and the Ashtoreths [Canaanite goddesses] from among you, and prepare your hearts for the Lord, and serve Him only; and He will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines. Only then would God secure their land and give them protection from their enemies.

Samuel gathered the people, and they fasted that day, repenting of their sins. Then Samuel prayed on behalf of all the people. The outcome was that God gave them a miraculous victory over the enemy.

## CHARACTERS Continued

Samuel labored throughout his life for the welfare of his people and served as Israel's last judge before the people asked for a monarchy. The biblical record shows that although there were battles and some losses by Israel's armies, overall, the nation survived and flourished under the leadership of Samuel.

Eventually, order was established, godliness was promoted, and the nation was at peace and prospered. So the Philistines were subdued, and they did not come anymore into the territory of Israel. And the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.

Then the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron to Gath; and Israel recovered its territory from the hands of the Philistines. Also there was peace between Israel and the Amorites.

**SAUL** - According to the Tanakh, Saul was the son of Kish, of the family of the Matrites, and a member of the tribe of Benjamin, one of the twelve Tribes of Israel. It appears that he came from Gibeah.

Saul married Ahinoam, daughter of Ahimaaz. They had four sons and two daughters. The sons were Jonathan, Abinadab, Malchishua and Ish-bosheth. Their daughters were named Merab and Michal. Saul also had a concubine named Rizpah, daughter of Aiah, who bore him two sons, Armoni and Mephibosheth.

Saul is sent with a servant to look for his father's strayed donkeys. Leaving his home at Gibeah, they eventually arrive at the district of Zuph, at which point Saul suggests abandoning their search.

Saul's servant tells him that they happen to be near the town of Ramah, where a famous seer is located, and suggests that they should consult him first. The seer (later identified by the text as Samuel) offers hospitality to Saul and later anoints him in private.

A popular movement having arisen to establish a centralized monarchy like other nations, Samuel assembles the people at Mizpah in Benjamin to appoint a king. Samuel organizes the people by tribe and by clan. Using the Urim and Thummim, he selects the tribe of Benjamin, from within the tribe selecting the clan of Matri, and from them selecting Saul.

After having been chosen as monarch, Saul returns to his home in Gibeah, along with a number of followers. The Ammonites, led by Nahash, lay siege to Jabesh-Gilead. Under the terms of surrender, the occupants of the city are to be forced into slavery and have their right eyes removed.

Instead they send word of this to the other tribes of Israel, and the tribes west of the Jordan assemble an army under Saul. Saul leads the army to victory over the Ammonites, and the people congregate at Gilgal where they acclaim Saul as king and he is crowned.

Having been anointed by Samuel, Saul is told of signs indicating that he has been divinely appointed. The last of these is that Saul will be met by an ecstatic group of



## CHARACTERS Continued

prophets leaving a high place and playing the lyre, tambourine, and flutes. Saul encounters the ecstatic prophets and joins them.

Later, Saul sends men to pursue David, but when they meet a group of ecstatic prophets playing music, they become possessed by a prophetic state and join in. Saul sends more men, but they too join the prophets. Eventually Saul himself goes, and also joins the prophets.

After relieving the siege of Jabesh-Gilead, Saul conducts military campaigns against the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Aram Rehob and the kings of Zobah, the Philistines, and the Amalekites. A biblical summary states that wherever he turned, he was victorious.

In his continuing battles with Philistines, Saul instructs his armies, by a rash oath, to fast. Jonathan's party were not aware of the oath and ate honey, resulting in Jonathan realizing that he had broken an oath of which he was not aware, but was nevertheless liable for its breach, until popular intervention allowed Jonathan to be saved from death on account of his victory over the Philistines.

Saul planned a military action against the Philistines. Samuel said that he would arrive in seven days to perform the requisite rites. When a week passed with no word of Samuel, and with the Israelites growing restless, Saul prepares for battle by offering sacrifices. Samuel arrives just as Saul is finishing sacrificing and reprimands Saul for not obeying his instructions.

Later Samuel instructs Saul to make war on the Amalekites and to utterly destroy them. Having forewarned the Kenites who were living among the Amalekites to leave, Saul goes to war and defeats the Amalekites. Saul kills all the men, women, children and poor quality livestock, but leaves alive the king and best livestock.

When Samuel learns that Saul has not obeyed his instructions in full, he informs Saul that God has rejected him as king due to his disobedience. As Samuel turns to go, Saul seizes hold of his garments and tears off a piece; Samuel prophesies that the kingdom will likewise be torn from Saul. Samuel then kills the Amalekite king himself. Samuel and Saul each return home and never meet again after these events.

After Samuel tells Saul that God has rejected him as king, David, a son of Jesse, from the tribe of Judah, enters the story: from this point on Saul's story is largely the account of his increasingly troubled relationship with David.

Samuel heads to Bethlehem, ostensibly to offer sacrifice and invited Jesse and his sons. Dining together, Jesse's sons are brought one by one to Samuel, each being rejected; at last, Jesse sends for David, the youngest, who is tending sheep. When brought to Samuel, David is anointed by him in front of his other brothers.

Saul is troubled by a mental disorder described as an evil spirit sent by God. He requests soothing music, and a servant recommends David the son of Jesse, who is renowned for his skills as a harpist and other talents.

## CHARACTERS Continued

When word of Saul's needs reaches Jesse, he sends David, who had been looking after Jesse's flock, with gifts as a tribute, and David is appointed as Saul's armor bearer. With Jesse's permission he remains at court, playing the harp as needed to calm Saul during his troubled spells.

The Philistines return with an army to attack Israel, and the Philistine and Israelite forces gather on opposite sides of a valley. The Philistine's champion Goliath issues a challenge for single combat, but none of the Israelite accept.

David is described as a young shepherd who happens to be delivering food to his three eldest brothers in the army, and he hears Goliath's challenge. David speaks mockingly of the Philistines to some soldiers; his speech is overheard and reported to Saul, who summons David and appoints David as his champion. David easily defeats Goliath with a single shot from a sling.

Saul offered his elder daughter Merab as a wife to the now popular David, after his victory over Goliath, but David demurred. David distinguishes himself in the Philistine wars. Upon David's return from battle, the women praise him in song: Saul has slain his thousands and David his tens of thousands implying that David is the greater warrior. Saul fears David's growing popularity and henceforth views him as a rival to the throne.

Saul's son Jonathan and David become close friends. Jonathan recognizes David as the rightful king, and made a covenant with David, because he loved him as his own soul. Jonathan even gives David his military clothes, symbolizing David's position as successor to Saul.

On two occasions, Saul threw a spear at David as he played the harp for Saul. David becomes increasingly successful and Saul becomes increasingly resentful. Now Saul actively plots against David. Saul offered his other daughter, Michal in marriage to David.

David initially rejects this offer also, claiming he is too poor. Saul offers to accept a bride price of 100 Philistine foreskins, intending that David die in the attempt. Instead, David obtains 200 foreskins and is consequently married to Michal.

Jonathan arranges a short-lived reconciliation between Saul and David and for a while David served Saul as in times past until the distressing spirit from the Lord re-appeared. Saul sends assassins in the night, but Michal helps him escape, tricking them by placing a household idol in his bed.

David flees to Jonathan, who arranges a meeting with his father. While dining with Saul, Jonathan explains David's absence, saying he has been called away to his brothers. But Saul sees through the ruse and reprimands Jonathan for protecting David, warning him that his love of David will cost him the kingdom.

The next day, Jonathan meets with David and tells him Saul's intent. The two friends say their goodbyes, and David flees into the countryside. Saul later marries Michal to another man.

## CHARACTERS Continued

Saul is later informed by his head shepherd, Doeg the Edomite, that high priest Ahimelech assisted David, giving him the sword of Goliath, which had been kept at the temple at Nob. Doeg kills Ahimelech and eighty-five other priests and Saul orders the death of the entire population of Nob.

David had left Nob by this point and had amassed some 300 disaffected men including some outlaws. With these men David rescues the town of Keilah from a Philistine attack. Saul realizes he could trap David and his men by laying the city to siege.

David realizes that the citizens of Keilah will betray him to Saul. He flees to Ziph pursued by Saul. Saul hunts David in the vicinity of Ziph on two occasions: Some of the inhabitants of Ziph betray David's location to Saul, but David hears about it and flees with his men to Maon.

Saul follows David, but is forced to break off pursuit when the Philistines invade. After dealing with that threat Saul tracks David to the caves at Engedi. As he searches the cave David manages to cut off a piece of Saul's robe without being discovered, yet David restrains his men from harming the king. David then leaves the cave, revealing himself to Saul, and gives a speech that persuades Saul to reconcile.

On the second occasion, Saul returns to Ziph with his men. When David hears of this, he slips into Saul's camp by night, and again restrains his men from killing the king; instead he steals Saul's spear and water jug, leaving his own spear thrust into the ground by Saul's side.

The next day, David reveals himself to Saul, showing the jug and spear as proof that he could have slain him. David then persuades Saul to reconcile with him; the two swear never to harm each other. After this they never see each other again.

The Philistines make war again, assembling at Shunem, and Saul leads his army to face them at Mount Gilboa. Before the battle he goes to consult a medium or witch at Endor. The medium, unaware of his identity, reminds him that the king has made witchcraft a capital offence, but he assures her that Saul will not harm her.

She conjures the spirit of the prophet Samuel, who before his death had prophesied that he would lose the kingdom. Samuel tells him that God will no longer hear his prayers and that the next day he will lose both the battle and his life. Saul collapses in fear, and the medium restores him with food in anticipation of the next day's battle.

As the defeated Israelites flee, Saul asks his armor bearer to kill him, but he refuses, and so Saul falls upon his own sword. The victorious Philistines recover Saul's body as well as those of his three sons who also died in the battle, decapitated them and displayed them on the wall of Beth-Shan.

They display Saul's armor in the temple of Ashtaroth (an Ascalonian temple of the Canaanites). But at night the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead retrieve the bodies for cremation and burial.

Later on, David takes the bones of Saul together and of his son Jonathan and buries them in Zela, in the tomb of his father.

## CHARACTERS Continued

**DAVID** – The first book of Samuel portrays David as the youngest of the eight sons of Jesse of Bethlehem. His mother is not named in any book of the Bible, but the Talmud identifies her as Nitzzevet daughter of Adael.

God is angered when Saul, Israel's king, unlawfully offers a sacrifice and later disobeys a divine instruction to not only kill all of the Amalekites, but to destroy also their confiscated property. Consequently, he sends the prophet Samuel to anoint David, the youngest son of Jesse of Bethlehem, to be king instead.

God sends an evil spirit to torment Saul. Saul's courtiers recommend that he send for David, a man skillful on the lyre, wise in speech, and brave in battle. So David enters Saul's service as one of the royal armor-bearers, and plays the lyre to soothe the king, who from time to time is troubled by an evil spirit.

War comes between Israel and the Philistines, and the giant Goliath challenges the Israelites to send out a champion to face him in single combat. David, sent by his father to bring provisions to his brothers serving in Saul's army, declares that he can defeat Goliath. Refusing the king's offer of the royal armor, he kills Goliath with his sling. Saul inquires the name of the young hero's father.

Saul sets David over his army. All Israel loves David, but his popularity causes Saul to fear him ("What else can he wish but the kingdom?"). Saul plots his death, but Saul's son Jonathan, one of those who loves David, warns him of his father's schemes and David flees.

He goes first to Nob, where he is fed by the priest Ahimelech and given Goliath's sword, and then to Gath, the Philistine city of Goliath, intending to seek refuge with King Achish there. Achish's servants or officials question his loyalty, and David sees that he is in danger there.

He goes next to the cave of Adullam, where his family join him. From there he goes to seek refuge with the king of Moab, but the prophet Gad advises him to leave and he goes to the Forest of Hereth, and then to Keilah, where is involved in a further battle with the Philistines.

Saul plans to besiege Keilah so that he can capture David, so David leaves the city in order to protect its inhabitants. From there he takes refuge in the mountains in the Wilderness of Ziph. Jonathan meets with David again and confirms his loyalty to David as the future king.

The people of Ziph notify Saul that David is taking refuge in their territory, Saul seeks confirmation and plans to capture David in the Wilderness of Maon, but his attention is diverted by a renewed Philistine invasion and David is able to secure some respite at Ein Gedi.

Returning from battle with the Philistines, Saul heads to Ein Gedi in pursuit of David and enters the cave where, as it happens, David and his supporters are hiding, "to attend to his needs". David realizes he has an opportunity to kill Saul, but this is not his intention:

## CHARACTERS Continued

he secretly cuts off a corner of Saul's robe and when Saul has left the cave he comes out to pay homage to Saul as the king and to demonstrate, using the piece of robe, that he holds no malice towards Saul. The two are thus reconciled and Saul recognizes David as his successor.

Subsequently, Saul and David were reconciled following a similar occurrence when David was able to infiltrate Saul's camp on the hill of Hachilah and remove his spear and a jug of water from his side while he and his guards lay asleep.

In this account, David is advised by Abishai that this is his opportunity to kill Saul, but David declines, saying he will not stretch out [his] hand against the Lord's anointed. David shows, by removing Saul's spear, that he had chance to take Saul's life but did not do so.

Saul confesses that he has been wrong to pursue David, blesses him and promises that he will do great things and surely triumph. David prays that his own protection will be like his protection of Saul. This, it seems, was their last interview: after this they saw each other no more.

David took refuge a second time with Achish, the Philistine king of Gath. Achish permits David to reside in Ziklag, close to the border between Gath and Judea, from where he leads raids against the Geshurites, the Girzites and the Amalekites, but leads Achish to believe he is attacking the Israelites in Judah, the Jerahmeelites and the Kenites.

Achish believes that David had become a loyal vassal, but he never wins the trust of the princes or lords of Gath and at their request Achish instructs David to remain behind to guard the camp when the Philistines march against Saul. David returns to Ziklag.

Jonathan and Saul are killed in battle, and David is anointed king over Judah. In the north, Saul's son Ish-Bosheth is anointed king of Israel, and war ensues until Ish-Bosheth is murdered. With the death of Saul's son, the elders of Israel come to Hebron and David is anointed king over all of Israel.

He conquers Jerusalem, previously a Jebusite stronghold, and makes it his capital. He brings the Ark of the Covenant to the city, intending to build a temple for God, but the prophet Nathan forbids it, prophesying that the temple would be built by one of his sons.

Nathan also prophesies that God has made a covenant with the house of David stating, your throne shall be established forever. David wins more victories over the Philistines, while the Moabites, Edomites, Amalekites, Ammonites and king Hadadezer of Aram-Zobah pay tribute after being defeated.

During a siege to conquer the Ammonite capital of Rabbah, David seduces Bathsheba and causes the death of her husband Uriah the Hittite. In response, Nathan prophesies the punishment that shall fall upon him stating, the sword shall never depart from your house.

## CHARACTERS Continued

In fulfillment of these words, David's son Absalom rebels. The rebellion ends at the battle of the Wood of Ephraim. Absalom's forces are routed, and Absalom is caught by his long hair in the branches of a tree, and killed by Joab, contrary to David's order.

Joab was the commander of David's army. David laments the death of his favorite son. When David is old and bedridden, Adonijah, his eldest surviving son and natural heir, declares himself king.

Bathsheba and Nathan go to David and obtain his agreement to crown Bathsheba's son Solomon as king, according to David's earlier promise, and the revolt of Adonijah is put down. David dies at the age of 70 after reigning for 40 years, and on his deathbed counsels Solomon to walk in the ways of God and to take revenge on his enemies.

**BATHSHEBA** - Bathsheba was the daughter of Eliam. Her father is identified by some scholars with Eliam mentioned as the son of Ahithophel, who is described as the Gilonite. Bathsheba was the wife of Uriah the Hittite, and afterward of David, by whom she gave birth to Solomon, who succeeded David as king.

David's seduction of Bathsheba, is omitted in the Books of Chronicles. The story is told that David, while walking on the roof of his palace, saw Bathsheba, who was then the wife of Uriah, having a bath. He immediately desired her and later made her pregnant.

In an effort to conceal his sin, and save Bathsheba from punishment for adultery, David summoned Uriah from the army (with whom he was on campaign) in the hope that Uriah would re-consummate his marriage and think that the child was his. But Uriah was unwilling to violate the ancient kingdom rule applying to warriors in active service. Rather than go home to his own bed, he preferred to remain with the palace troops.

After repeated efforts to convince Uriah to have sex with Bathsheba, the king gave the order to his general, Joab, that Uriah should be placed on the front lines of the battle, where Uriah would be more likely to die. David had Uriah himself carry the message that led to his death. After Uriah was dead, David married the now widowed Bathsheba.

David's action was displeasing to the Lord, who accordingly sent Nathan the prophet to reprove the king. After relating the parable of the rich man who took away the one little ewe lamb of his poor neighbor, and exciting the king's anger against the unrighteous act, the prophet applied the case directly to David's action with regard to Bathsheba.

The king at once confessed his sin and expressed sincere repentance. Bathsheba's first child by David was struck with a severe illness and died, unnamed, a few days after birth, which the king accepted as his punishment. Nathan also noted that David's house would be punished to avenge Uriah's murder.

Bathsheba later gave birth to David's son Solomon. David's punishment came to pass years later when one of David's much-loved sons, Absalom, led an insurrection that

## CHARACTERS Continued

plunged the kingdom into civil war. Moreover, to manifest his claim to be the new king, Absalom had sexual intercourse in public with ten of his father's concubines, which could be considered a direct, tenfold divine retribution for David's taking the woman of another man.

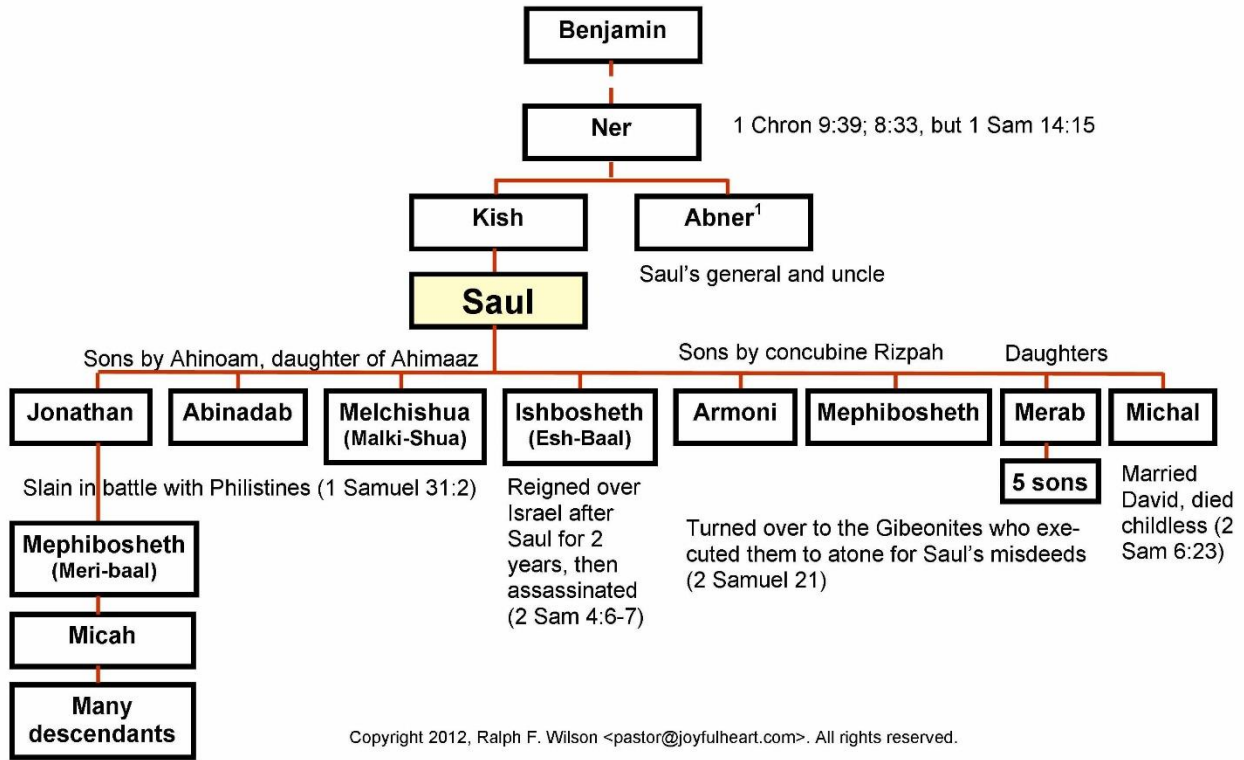
In David's old age, Bathsheba secured the succession to the throne by Solomon, her son with David, according to David's earlier promise, instead of David's elder surviving sons by other wives, such as Kileab, Adonijah and others.

## BIBLE TIMELINE

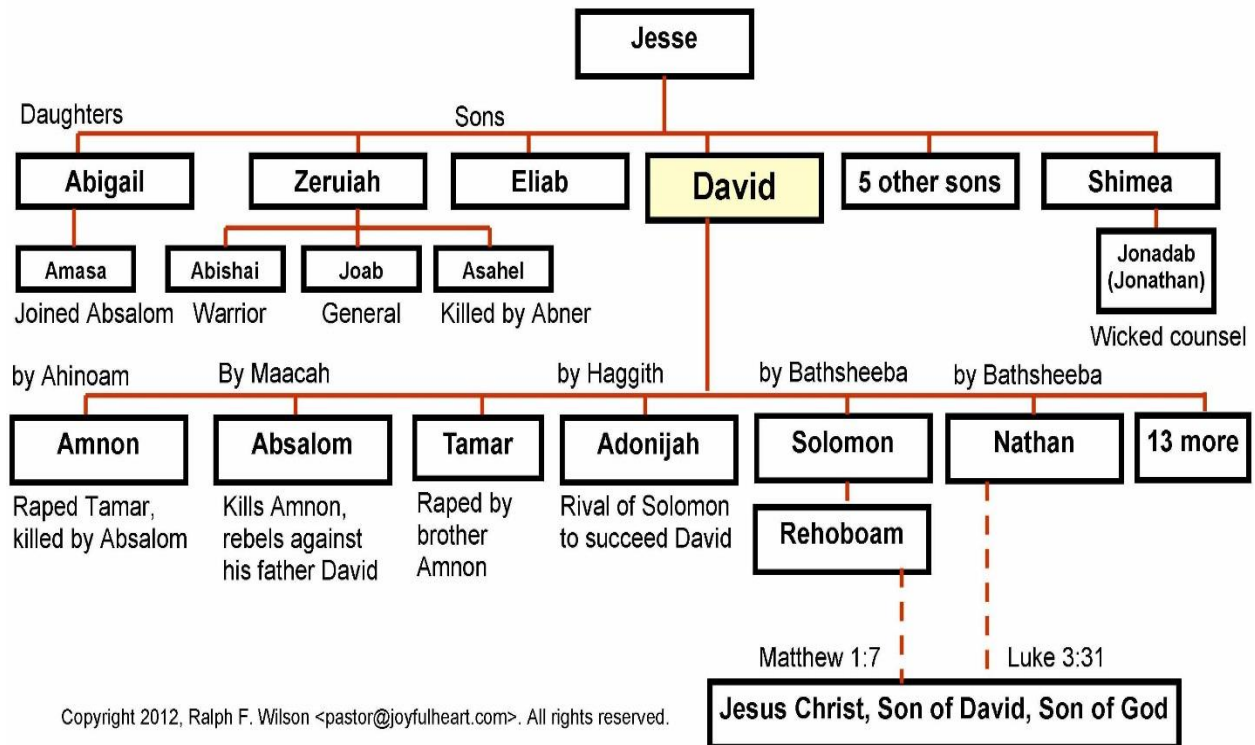
1100 BC	Birth of Samuel	1 Samuel 1
1100 BC	Hannah's Song	1 Samuel 2
1070 BC	Battle of Shiloh	1 Samuel 3
1070 BC	Philistines Take the Ark	1 Samuel 4, 5
1050 BC	Israelites Repent at Mizpeh	1 Samuel 7:3
1043 BC	Saul Becomes King	1 Samuel 8 - 10
1042 BC	Saul Defeats the Ammonites	1 Samuel 11, 12
1041 BC	Saul's War with the Philistines	1 Samuel 13
1028 BC	Saul's Disobedience and Samuel's Rebuke	1 Samuel 15
1024 BC	David Kills Goliath	1 Samuel 17
1015 BC	Jonathan's Friendship with David	1 Samuel 18
1014 BC	David Protected from Saul	1 Samuel 19
1013 BC	David and Jonathan's Covenant	1 Samuel 20
1012 BC	David at Nob and Gath	1 Samuel 21
1011 BC	David Spares Saul's Life	1 Samuel 24
1011 BC	Samuel Dies	1 Samuel 25
1010 BC	David Destroys the Amalekites	1 Samuel 30
1010 BC	Saul and His Sons Killed	1 Samuel 31

**MAP REFERENCES**

**The House of Saul**



**The House of David**





## MAP REFERENCES Continued

