

A Spence Bible Study Summary

Life in Canaan: The Early Years

A comprehensive exploration of the historical and theological themes of Joshua, Judges, Ruth, and the two books of Samuel, the five books of the Hebrew Bible that narrate the emergence of Israel as a nation.

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Introduction

This summary provides a concise review of the biblical books of Joshua, Judges, Ruth, I Samuel, and II Samuel, covering the historical period from the death of Moses to the death of David. This summary aims to offer an accessible overview of these books, highlighting key events, characters, and themes, without delving into detailed theological interpretations.

The narrative begins with Joshua, Moses' successor, leading the Israelites into the Promised Land of Canaan. The conquest is marked by both divine assistance and human challenges, as exemplified by the fall of Jericho and the sin of Achan.

Following Joshua, the period of the Judges portrays a cyclical pattern of faithfulness, disobedience, oppression, and deliverance. Notable judges like Ehud, Deborah, Gideon, and Samson emerge as charismatic leaders who deliver Israel from various enemies. However, the book also highlights the moral and spiritual decline of Israel during this era.

The book of Ruth offers a contrasting story of love, loyalty, and redemption set against the backdrop of hardship. Ruth's unwavering commitment to her mother-in-law Naomi and her eventual marriage to Boaz symbolize God's faithfulness even in times of adversity.

The focus shifts to the establishment of the monarchy with the anointing of Saul as the first king of Israel. Despite initial success, Saul's reign is marked by disobedience and a tragic downfall.

Finally, the narrative centers on David, a man after God's own heart, who rises from humble beginnings to become the greatest king of Israel. David's life is a tapestry of triumphs and failures, victories and tragedies. However, through it all, the Davidic covenant ensures the continuity of his lineage and foreshadows the coming of the Messiah.

Summary of Joshua

Conquering Challenges with Faith and Courage

Yahweh Tells Joshua to Lead the Conquest of Canaan

Joshua 1

After the death of Moses, Yahweh says to Joshua, son of Nun, Moses' aide: "Get ready to lead the Israelites across the Jordan River and enter the promised land. Your territory will extend from the desert in the south to Lebanon, and from the Euphrates River where the Hittites live, to the Mediterranean Sea in the west. I will be with you; I will never leave or forsake you." Be careful to obey all the laws of the Torah that Moses gave you. Keep the Torah always on your lips; meditate on it day and night.

Joshua announces to the Israelites that in three days they will cross the Jordan and take the land the LORD has given them. The three tribes who were given land on the east side of the Jordan River are reminded by Joshua that they must cross the Jordan with the other tribes and do battle for the land in Canaan. They agree to help the other tribes.

Spies Are Sent to Jericho

Joshua 2

Joshua sends two spies from Shittim across the river to check out the Canaanite city of Jericho. They enter the house of a prostitute named Rahab and stay there. The king of Jericho learns that the spies are in the city. The king's men approach Rahab, asking her to turn the spies over to them. But Rahab has hidden the spies under the stalks of flax on the roof. She tells the king's men the spies have already gone. The king's men rush out of the city gates to pursue them.

Rahab goes up to the roof. She confides to the spies that she knows that their God has brought them here to take the land. Then she asks, "Please swear to me by the LORD that you will show kindness to me and my family and save us from the death of battle." The spies agree. They tell her to tie a scarlet cord in her window and keep her family in her house. Her house will be spared. She agrees. Rahab leads them down by a rope through her window, which was part of the city wall. They hide for three days until the king's men return to Jericho.

The spies return to the Israelite camp. They tell Joshua that the city is aware of their reputation and are in fear of their LORD.

Crossing The Jordan

Joshua 3

The Israelites set out from Shittim the next morning and make camp near the shore of the Jordan. After three days, they are given instructions for the day of crossing. The LORD is preparing them to eventually drive out the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites, and Jebusites. The next day the priests carry the ark of the covenant to the river and stand with it in the middle. The Jordan is at flood stage. As soon as the priests with the ark step into the water, the water separates, leaving dry land from the town of Adam to the Dead Sea. Twelve men from the tribes of Israel follow behind the ark of the covenant at a safe distance of 3,000 feet to cross over into Canaan. Then all Israel passes over on dry ground.

Summary of Joshua

Memorial Stones

Joshua 4

While the priests holding the ark of the covenant remain in the riverbed, twelve men among the tribes are instructed to each bring a stone from where the priests are standing and carry them to the new camp on the Canaan side. Joshua says, "These stones will serve as a sign that the flow of the Jordan was cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD. They are to be a memorial to the people of Israel forever."

Once everyone is safely on the shore, the priests carry the ark onto the land of Canaan. Then the waters of the Jordan return to their place and reach flood stage as before. On the tenth day of the first month, the Israelites camp at Gilgal. Joshua sets up the twelve's memorial stones at Gilgal.

Foreskin Hill

Joshua 5

The LORD says to Joshua, "Make flint knives and circumcise the Israelites again." The place near Gilgal where this ritual occurred is Gibeath Haaraloth (*Foreskin Hill*). Even though the Hebrews who left Egypt had been circumcised before they left, none of them were allowed to enter the land, since they had not obeyed the LORD. Their sons born during the forty years in the wilderness had not been circumcised while on the journey. So, all males were circumcised in one ceremony near Gilgal.

The First Passover the Promised Land

On the fourteenth day of the month, while camping at Gilgal, the Israelites celebrate Passover. The day after Passover, they eat some of the produce of the land. Then, the manna which had been provided daily on the journey stops appearing for them. They now enjoy the produce of Canaan.

Joshua Encounters the Commander of The LORD's Army Near Jericho

The first city that the Israelites will attempt to conquer is Jericho. When Joshua ventures near Jericho one day, he sees a man standing in front of him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua asks the stranger, "Are you for us or for our enemies?" The stranger replies, "Neither. But as commander of the army of the LORD I have come now." Then Joshua falls facedown to the ground, asking, "Does my Lord have a message for me?" The commander of the LORD's army replies, "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua does so.

The Fall of Jericho the City

Joshua 6

The leaders of Jericho know that the Israelites want to take over the city. The gates are barred shut. The LORD instructs Joshua, "March around the city once with all the armed men, and with seven priests carrying trumpets of ram's horns in front of the ark. Do this for six days. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times, with the priest blowing the trumpets. When the long blast of the trumpet comes, have the whole army give a loud shout; then the wall of the city will collapse. Then the army will go straight into the city."

The Israelites do as the LORD commanded. On the seventh day, the walls come tumbling down. The Hebrews devote the city to the LORD and destroy everything in it, including men, women, young, old, cattle, sheep, and donkeys. But Joshua spares Rahab and her family, as the spies had promised her under oath. She now lives among the Israelites.

Summary of Joshua

Joshua pronounces a curse on the city of Jericho, and anyone who tries to rebuild it. Joshua's fame spreads throughout the land.

The Fall of Achan the Man

Joshua 7

Not everyone obeyed the command to leave what was left of Jericho as a dedicated sacrifice to the LORD. Achan, of the tribe of Judah, had taken some of the bounty for himself. The LORD's anger now burns against Israel because of what Achan has done.

Unaware of Achan's disobedience, Joshua sends spies to check out the next city, Ai. The spies return with a very optimistic report. They believe that only three thousand soldiers are needed to conquer the city of Ai. So, Joshua sends three thousand men to battle. They are quickly routed by the men of Ai. They chased the Israelites from the city.

Joshua falls facedown to the ground before the ark of the LORD. He prays, "Sovereign LORD, why did you bring us across the Jordan to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites?" The LORD responds, "Israel has sinned. They violated my covenant and took some of the things dedicated to me. They have stolen, lied, and made my things their own. That is why they cannot stand against their enemies. I will not be with you unless you destroy whatever among you is devoted to destruction."

Early the next morning Joshua has everyone come forward by tribes. The tribe of Judah is separated out. The clans of Judah came forward, and the Zerahites are singled out. The Zerahites come forward by families, and Zimri is singled out. Joshua has Zimri's family come forward man by man, and Achan is singled out.

Joshua says to Achan, "Honor the LORD and tell me what you have done!" Achan replies, "It is true! I have sinned against the LORD. I took a Babylonian robe, two hundred shekels of silver and a bar of gold. They are hidden inside my tent."

Then all Israel stones him and his family. Afterwards, they burn them. Then the LORD turns from his anger. The place has been called Valley of Achor (*trouble*) ever since.

The Downfall of Ai

Joshua 8

The LORD says to Joshua, "Do not be discouraged. Take the whole army with you and attack the city of Ai. I have delivered it into your hands." Joshua's army of thirty thousand men set out at night. The majority hide a short distance from the city, between Bethel and Ai.

Joshua takes a smaller group of five thousand into the valley. When the King of Ai sees Joshua's small army, he sends all his army out to meet them. Joshua guides his soldiers to head toward the wilderness, as if they are running away. The men of Ai pursue them, moving farther away from the city. Joshua holds up his javelin, signaling for the ambush to begin. The larger Israelite force comes out of hiding to attack the city while there are no soldiers to defend it. The Israelites enter the city and set it on fire.

Meanwhile, Joshua's smaller force turns around to attack Ai's army in the open. The main Israelite force now exits the burning city to surprise Ai's soldiers from behind. The ambush quickly destroys Ai's army. Twelve thousand men and women of Ai fall that day.

The king of Ai is taken to Joshua. Joshua burns the entire city, making it a permanent heap of ruins. He impales the body of the king, leaving him on a pole until evening.

Summary of Joshua

The Covenant Renewal at Mount Ebal

Then Joshua builds an altar on Mount Ebal to the LORD, just as Moses had earlier commanded the Israelites before he died. They offer burnt offerings and sacrifice fellowship offerings. Joshua writes on stones a copy of the law of Moses. Afterward, Joshua reads all the words of the law, including the blessings and the curses.

The Gibeonite Deception

Joshua 9

The Canaanite city-kings hear of the success of the Israelites. They come together and agree to protect each other from Israel. However, the Canaanite people of Gibeon decide to trick the Israelites to protect themselves. A delegation from Gibeon pretends to be foreigners. They dress in old clothes and carry food that is dry and moldy. Then they go to Joshua at Gilgal and say, "We are travelers from a distant country; make a treaty with us."

The Israelites do not take the time to see if their story is true, and they do not ask the LORD for guidance. Joshua makes a treaty of peace with the Gibeonites, and the leaders ratify it. Three days later Israel learns that the Gibeonites are their Canaanite neighbors. The leaders agree that they must honor the oath they took to protect the Gibeonites, but they are not pleased. Joshua summons the Gibeonites and asks, "Why did you deceive us? You are now cursed to be just woodcutters and water carriers for the house of God."

The Gibeonites admit to Joshua that they had heard of the LORD's command to take the whole land and destroy the people there. They confess they were afraid. Upon hearing this, Joshua saved the Gibeonites from the Israelites.

Rescuing The Gibeonites from The Amorites

Joshua 10

Adoni-Zedek, king of Jerusalem, hears of the success of the Israelites, and that Gibeon has made a treaty with Israel. So, Adoni-Zedek appeals to the other Amorite city-kings of Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon. "Come up and help me," he says, "because Gibeon is now aligned with Israel."

An Amorite alliance is formed. The five kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon join forces. They move up and take position against Gibeon and attack it. The Gibeonites send word to Joshua at Gilgal: "Come quickly to save us!"

Joshua marches with his army to Gibeon. The LORD says to Joshua, "Do not be afraid of them." After an all-night march, Joshua's army arrives and takes the Amorite alliance by surprise. The Israelites defeat them. They pursue the fleeing Amorites and cut them down all the way to Makkedah. During this pursuit, the LORD hurls large hailstones down on the Amorites. More of them die from the hail than the sword.

During the battle, Joshua realizes that the darkness is about to end the battle before success is secure. Joshua says to the LORD, "Sun, stand still over Gibeon." The sun stands still, and the moon stops, until Israel triumphs over its enemies. There has never been a day like it before or since, when the LORD was given a command by a human, and the LORD obeyed.

Summary of Joshua

The Amorite Kings Executed

The five Amorite kings flee to a cave at Makkedah amid the battle. Joshua learns of this and has the mouth of the cave blocked with large rocks. The fighting continues and the kings' armies are defeated. Then Joshua opens the mouth of the cave and brings out the kings. Joshua puts the kings to death, placing their bodies on poles and leaving them hanging until darkness falls.

Southern Cities Conquered

While there, Joshua destroys Makkedah and kills the king. The soldiers of Israel move on to Libnah and attack it. God gives that city into Israel's hand. Joshua does to its king what he has done to the others. The same success occurs in Lachish, Eglon, and Hebron, and even Gezer. The kings suffer the same fate.

Not stopping there, they turn around and attack Debir. They do to Debir and its king as they had done to the others. They subdue the whole region, including the hill country, the Negev, the western foothills, and the mountain slopes. Joshua destroys all who breathe, just as the LORD commanded. From Kadesh Barnea to Gaza and from Goshen to Gibeon, the Israelites have conquered the land, because the LORD fought for Israel. Finally, Joshua returns with all Israel to the camp at Gilgal.

Northern Kings Defeated

Joshua 11

Jabin is the king of Hazor in the north. When he hears of Israel's victories, he makes an alliance with the northern kings of Madon, Shimron, Akshaph, and other Canaanites. He eventually allies with Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, and Hivites. All these kings join forces and camp at the Waters of Merom to fight Israel.

The LORD says to Joshua, "Do not be afraid, because I will hand them all over to you. When I do, hamstring their horses, and burn their chariots." So, Israel attacks them, and defeats them. Then he destroys the cities they represent. The soldiers are allowed to carry off plunder and livestock, but not the people.

With these victories Joshua takes the entire land, as the LORD directed Moses. There is rest from war.

Summary of Joshua

List Of Defeated Canaanite Cities

Joshua 12

Defeated Earlier by Moses (on the non-Canaan Trans-Jordan side)

Heshbon Amorite king was Sihon

Bashan Rephaite king was Og

Defeated By Joshua (Cities whose kings are conquered on western side of Jordan)						
1	Jericho		13	Libnah	25	Taanach
2	Ai (near Bethel)		14	Adullam	26	Megiddo
3	Jerusalem (?)		15	Makkedah	27	Kedesh
4	Hebron		16	Bethel	28	Jokneam in Carmel
5	Jarmuth		17	Tappuah	29	Dor (in Naphoth Dor)
6	Lachish		18	Hepher	30	Goyim in Gilgal
7	Eglon		19	Aphek	31	Tirzah
8	Gezer		20	Lasharon		
9	Debir		21	Madon		
10	Geder		22	Hazor		
11	Hormah		23	Shimron Meron		
12	Arad		24	Akshaph		

List Of Land Still to Be Taken

Joshua 13

The LORD tells Joshua, “There is still a lot of land that needs to be captured. Here is a list:

The Canaanites control territory from Shihor near Egypt to Ekron in the north.

The Philistines control the cities of Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron.

The Canaanites called Avvites, and the Gebalites, control land in the south.

Also in the north is the Lebanon Valley and the hill country of Lebanon and Sidon. I will take care of this mountain area.

Joshua, go ahead and divide the land among the nine tribes and the half-tribe of Manasseh.”

Tribal Land Previously Allotted by Moses (Numbers 32)

The tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half of the tribe of Manasseh, asked Moses near the end of his life to be given land on the east side of the Jordan River. Moses agreed. The Israelites had conquered the people in all the land he gave these tribes, except for Geshur and Maakah. No one ever drove them out. They continue to live among the Israelites.

Reuben received the southernmost land on the Transjordan that was allotted by Moses. Its western border is the Jordan River.

Gad was given the land covering half of what had been Ammon territory. It also included all the eastern half of the Jordan River Valley.

Summary of Joshua

Half of the tribe of **Manasseh** was assigned land on the east side as well. It included all the region of Bashan, which King Og once ruled. It also included half of Gilead. Moses assigned these lands while Israel was camped in the Plains of Moab, on the east side of the Jordan River. Moses did not give any land to his own tribe, Levi. He believed that the LORD God would take care of them.

Joshua's Method of Tribal Allotment

Joshua 14

Joshua, Eleazar (the high priest), and tribal leaders will assign land to the final nine tribes and remaining half-tribe of Manasseh that still need land. Each tribal leader will cast dice, believing that the LORD will control the outcome.

Joshua Keeps Moses' Promise to Caleb

Caleb, one of the twelve men Moses sent to spy on Canaan (*Numbers 13*), comes to Joshua before the process begins. He reminds Joshua, "You and I are the only spies to come back with a recommendation to trust God and enter the land. Moses made me a promise that day that I would live long enough to own some of the land that I spied on for him. Now, forty-five years later, here I am. I am asking you to give me land in those hills I scouted."

Joshua blesses Caleb. Then he gives him the city of Hebron to possess.

Now, with promises kept and wars ended, the tribes can make their new homes in the land.

Judah's Land

Joshua 15

South: From the southern tip of the Dead Sea to the Mediterranean Sea.

East: From the southern tip of the Dead Sea to its northern tip.

North: It goes up to but does not include Jerusalem. Then on to the Mediterranean Sea.

West: The Mediterranean Sea

Caleb's Land

Caleb is from the tribe of Judah. He was given Hebron to fulfill a promise made to him by Moses. There is a nearby city called Debir which still has Canaanites living there. Caleb offers his daughter in marriage to the man who captures the city.

Othniel is the son of Caleb's brother. He captures the city and marries Caleb's daughter (first cousin), Achsah. Achsah has Othniel ask her father, Caleb, for land. Caleb gives them land. Then she complains to her father that the land has no water on it. So, Caleb gives them land with two springs.

Summary of Joshua

Joseph's Two Tribes

Joshua 16

Ephraim's Land

South: Starts at Ataroth-addar, to Beth Horon, and continues to the Mediterranean Sea.

North: Michmethath to Taanath Shiloh to Janoah.

West: Tappuah to Dry Creek Kanah, to the Mediterranean Sea.

Ephraim is given (*by whom?*) some towns inside Manasseh's borders. Also, Ephraim does not capture the city of Gezer.

Manasseh's Land (inside Canaan)

Joshua 17

North: Borders with Asher's tribe. South to Michmethath, east to Shechem.

South: Northern side of Dry Creek Kanah westward to Mediterranean Sea.

West: Mediterranean Sea

Manasseh failed to conquer the following cities in their borders: Beth-shean, Ibleam, En-dor, Taanach, Megiddo.

Both Ephraim and Manasseh ask for more land. Joshua replies, "You have a lot of people, and you are strong together. We will give you the wooded hills so you can clear them and grow your families. You can also take the land from the Canaanites. That is up to you."

Manasseh Has a Women's Rights Issue (see Numbers 26-27, 36)

Zelophehad does not have any sons to inherit the land. He has five daughters: Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah.

His daughters go to see Eleazar the priest, Joshua, and other leaders. They say, "The LORD told Moses to give us land." The leaders do what the LORD said. The women are given land in Canaan.

Seven Tribes Still Need Land

Joshua 18

The Israelites gather at Shiloh and set up the tabernacle. Even though the country is under control, seven tribes are still without an inheritance. Joshua says, "Appoint three men from each tribe. They will make a survey of the remaining land and divide it into seven parts. Then I will cast lots for you in the presence of the LORD."

The men return with written descriptions on a scroll. Joshua then cast lots for them in Shiloh.

Benjamin's Allotment

The first lot comes up for Benjamin. They are given land between Judah and the Joseph tribes.

East: bordered by the Jordan River.

North: Jericho to Beth Aven to Bethel

West: Beth Horon to Kiriath Jearim

South: Kiriath Jearim to Nephtoah, to the edge of Jebus (Jerusalem) to northern tip of Dead Sea.

Cities: Fourteen cities and their villages

Summary of Joshua

Simeon Allotment

Joshua 19

Since Judah's portion is more than they need, Simeon inherits part of Judah's land in the middle. The entire inheritance resides within the borders of Judah. The main city is Beersheba.

Cities: Seventeen towns and their villages.

Zebulun's Allotment

In the southern area now known as Galilee, the northern tip of Zebulun extends to Sarid. Going southwest from Sarid, it extends to Jokneam. Going east from Sarid, it goes to Kisloth Tabor, and onto Eth Kazin. Near Neah, it goes north to Hannathon and ends at the Valley of Iphtah.

Cities: Twelve towns and their villages.

Issachar's Allotment

North: Bordered by Zebulun and Naphtali.
East: Bordered by the Jordan River.
South: Bordered West Manasseh.
West: Bordered by Zebulun and West Manasseh.

Cities: Sixteen towns and their villages.

Asher's Allotment

North: Border is Lebanon.
South: Border is West Manasseh and Zebulun.
East: Border is Zebulun and Naphtali.
West: Border is the Mediterranean Sea.

Cities: Twenty-two towns and their villages.

Naphtali's Allotment

North: Border is Lebanon.
West: Border is Asher and Zebulun.
East: Border is Jordan River.
South Border is Zebulun and Issachar.

Cities: Nineteen towns and their villages.

Dan's Allotment

Originally, Dan was given 17 towns and villages.
North: West Manasseh
West: Mediterranean Sea.
East: Ephraim and Benjamin.
South: Judah (and Philistines)

Summary of Joshua

Cities: Seventeen

When their territory is lost to them (overrun by Philistines) they go up north and attack the city of Lesham and occupy it. They will name the city after their ancestor, Dan.

Joshua's Family Allotment

After all the tribes received their inheritances, the Israelites gave Joshua an inheritance among them. He asked for and received the city of Timnath Serah in the hill country of his tribe, Ephraim.

Cities Of Refuge

Joshua 20

The LORD says to Joshua, "Tell the Israelites to designate six cities of refuge, three on each side of the Jordan River. If anyone accidentally kills a person, they may flee to one of these cities and find protection from an avenger of blood. If an avenger comes to the city of refuge, the elders of that city must not release the fugitive to him. The person taking sanctuary is to remain in the city until they stand trial in the city they fled and (or?) until the death of the high priest who is serving at that time (amnesty?). Then they may go back to their own home in the town from which they fled."

Summary of Joshua

Designated Cities: show in map below with **red stars** ★

West of Jordan River (in Canaan):

In Northern Canaan (Galilee): **Kadesh**, city in Naphtali tribe.

In Central Canaan: **Shechem**, city in West Manasseh.

In Southern Canaan: **Hebron**, city in Judah.

East of the Jordan River (Trans-Jordan)

Northern Transjordan: **Golan**, city in East Manasseh.

Central Transjordan: **Ramoth**, city in Gad.

Southern Transjordan: **Bezer**, city in Reuben



Summary of Joshua

Towns Given to the Tribe of Levi		Joshua 21	
Levite Clans (3)	Towns Provided (48)	Providers (12)	Type
Kohathites <i>(Aaron's Priestly Family)</i>	Hebron	Judah (& Simeon)	Refuge
	Libnah		
	Jattir		
	Eshtamoa		
	Holon		
	Debir		
	Ain		
	Juttah		
	Beth Shemesh		
	Gibeon	Benjamin	
Geba			
Anathoth			
Almon			
13			
Kohathites <i>(Non-priestly families who take care for the objects in the tabernacle)</i>	Shechem	Ephraim	Refuge
	Gezer		
	Kibzaim		
	Beth Horon		
	Eltekeh	Dan	
	Gibbethon		
	Aijalon		
	Gath Rimmon		
Taanach	Manasseh (west)		
Gath Rommon			
10			
Gershonites <i>(Tabernacle duties)</i>	Golan in Bashan	Manasseh (east)	Refuge
	Be Eshterah		
	Kishion	Issachar	
	Daberath		
	Jarmuth		
	En Gannim		
	Mishal	Asher	
	Abdon		
	Helkath		
	Rehob		
	Kedesh in Galilee	Naphtali	Refuge
	Hammoth Dor		
	Kartan		
13			
Merarites <i>(Tabernacle duties)</i>	Jokneam	Zebulun	
	Kartah		
	Dimnah		
	Nahalal		
	Bezer	Reuben	Refuge
	Jahaz		
	Kedemoth		
	Mephaath		
	Ramoth in Gilead	Gad	Refuge
	Mahanaim		
Heshbon			
Jazer			
12			

Summary of Joshua

Eastern Tribes Get to Return Home

Joshua 22

After the Levites have towns to live in, Joshua summons the tribes that opted to stay on the east side of the Jordan. He says, “You have done all that Moses asked of you and obeyed everything I commanded. Now you may return to your homes. Take your great wealth with you. Divide the plunder from your enemies with your fellow Israelites.”

The Eastern Tribes Build Altar on the West Side of the Jordan

When the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh get to the edge of Canaan near the Jordan, they build a large altar there by the river. When the Israelites hear this, the remaining Israelites gather at Shiloh to go to war against them. The Israelites send Phinehas son of Eleazar, the priest, to speak to the eastern tribes.

Phinehas asks them, “How can you break faith with the God of Israel like this? If you turn your backs on the LORD, He will be angry with all the Israelites. You will not be the only ones to suffer for this sin.”

The Eastern tribes reply, “God knows about this!” This was not done in rebellion to the LORD. We built this for the day your descendants might say to ours, ‘What do you have to do with the LORD, the God of Israel?’ That is why we built an altar to be a witness between us and you. In future generations no one will be able to say, ‘You have no share in the LORD.’”

Phinehas and the leaders are pleased with the response of the eastern tribes. They return to Canaan and explain the meaning of the altar at Geliloth near the Jordan. The Eastern tribes give their altar a name: *A Witness Between Us – that the LORD is God.*

Joshua Says Farewell to the Israelite Leaders

Joshua 23

A long time passes. The LORD has given Israel rest from their enemies. Joshua is getting frail. He brings the tribal leaders together and says to them, “I am old. You have seen the LORD at work for your sake. The LORD will drive your enemies out, and you will take possession of their land. Be strong and be careful to obey the Book of the Law of Moses. Do not associate with the nations that remain among you. Do not worship their gods. Hold fast to the LORD. Be careful to love the LORD your God.

“But if you ally yourselves with the survivors of these nations and intermarry with them, then the LORD will no longer drive out these nations.

“Now I am about to die. Remember that God has kept his promises and not failed you. If you violate the covenant with the LORD, and go and serve other gods, the LORD’s anger will burn against you, and you will perish from the promised land he has given you.

Joshua Renews the Covenant at Shechem

Joshua 24

As his final public act, Joshua assembles the twelve tribes at Shechem. Joshua says, “This is what the LORD wants us to know, ‘Long ago your ancestors lived beyond the Euphrates River and worshiped

Summary of Joshua

other gods. But I took your ancestor from that land and led him to Canaan. I gave him many descendants from Jacob and Esau. I gave the hill country to Esau, but Jacob's family went to Egypt."

[*the LORD continues*] "' I sent Moses and Aaron to bring the Hebrews out of Egypt. The Egyptians pursue them as far as the sea. But the Hebrews cry to the LORD for help. He put darkness between you and the Egyptians: he brought the sea over them and covered them. Then you lived in the wilderness for a long time."

"I brought you to the land of the Amorites and gave them into your hands. Finally, you crossed the Jordan River and did battle with Jericho. They fought against you, just like the Amorites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hittites, Girgashites, Hivites, and Jebusites. I gave them into your hands. I gave you land you did not toil and cities you did not build. You now live in those cities and eat produce you did not plant."

[*Joshua speaking*] "Now fear the LORD and serve him with faithfulness. Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods of your ancestors or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. As for me and my household, we will serve the LORD."

The people answer, "Far be it from us to forsake the LORD and serve other gods! He drove out before us all the nations who lived in this land. We too will serve the LORD. He is our God."

Then Joshua says, "You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen to serve the LORD. Now throw away the foreign gods that are among you and submit your hearts to the LORD."

Joshua makes a covenant for the Israelites at Shechem and reaffirms for them the laws of the covenant. He records these things in the Book of the Law of God. Joshua takes a large stone and sets it up under the oak near the holy place of the LORD.

Then Joshua dismisses the people to go home to their allotted land.

Joshua is Buried in the Promised Land

Not long after these things, Joshua dies at the age of one hundred and ten. The Israelites bury him in the land of his inheritance, at Timnath Serah in Ephraim.

Also, Joseph's bones, which the Israelites had brought from Egypt, are buried at Shechem in the tract of land that Jacob had bought centuries earlier for a hundred pieces of silver from Hamor, the father of Shechem. This became the inheritance of Joseph's descendants.

Eleazar, the son the Aaron, dies and is buried at Gibeah, which had been allotted to his son Phinehas in the hill country of Ephraim.

Summary of Judges

Cycles of Struggle and Deliverance

Judah & Simeon Step Up

Judges 1

After Joshua dies, Israel inquires of the LORD, “Who should go up first to fight the people of the land?” The LORD says, “Send Judah first. I will hand the land to them.” Judah takes the tribe of Simeon with them against the Canaanites and Perizzites. Israel defeats them at Bezek. They captured the king of Bezek and cut off his thumbs and big toes. The Israelites take him to Jerusalem, where he dies.

Jerusalem is Captured?

The people of Judah fight against the Jebusites for Jerusalem and capture it. Judah kills the people and sets the city on fire. (*but see [verse 21 below](#), also [II Samuel 5:6-10](#)*)

Debir is Captured?

Afterward, Judah goes down to fight the Canaanites in the highland, southern plains, and western foothills. (*The following is a repeat story from [Joshua 15:13-19](#)*). From there they move against those living in the city of Debir. Caleb says, “I will give my daughter Achsah as a wife to the one who defeats this city. Othniel, Caleb’s younger brother, captures it and marries Achsah. Achsah convinces her father, Caleb, to give them land to build a home. She sees that the land has no water on it. She asks her father for land with water. So, Caleb gives her the upper and lower springs.

More Cities Captured

The Kenites are descendants of Moses’ father-in-law (Jethro of Midian). They go with the tribe of Judah from Palm City (Jericho) into the Judean desert and live with the Amalekites. Then the tribes and Simeon defeat the Canaanites in Zephath and change the name to Hormah. Later, Judah captured Gaza, Ashkelon, Ekron, and their territories.

Thus, the LORD was with the tribe of Judah. They take the highlands. However, they do not drive out the people living in the plain because these people have iron chariots. [Verse 21](#): the tribe of Benjamin does not drive out the Jebusites who live in Jerusalem. The Jebusites still live with the tribe of Benjamin there today.

The tribe of Joseph goes up against Bethel, and the LORD is with them. When Joseph (tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh) sends spies on Bethel, they see a man coming out of the city. They say, “Show us the way in and we will spare you. He does, and the Joseph tribes destroy the city. They let that man and his relatives escape to find a new place. The man’s family travel to the land of the Hittites and build a city. They name it Luz, the old name of Bethel.

Summary of Judges

Places Not Captured

Manasseh does not drive out the people in Beth-Shean, Taanach, Dor, Ibleam, or Megiddo.

Zebulun does not drive out the people in Kitron or Nahalol.

Ashur does not drive out the people living in Acco, Sidon, Ahlab, Achzib, Helbah, Aphik, or Rehob.

Naphtali does not drive out the people living in Beth-Shemesh or Beth-anath.

The Amorites push Dan back from the plains into the highlands. Joseph's tribe is able to force the Amorites to work for them. The Amorites border runs from the Akrabbim pass, to Sela, and up.

When Israel becomes stronger, they force more of the Canaanites to work for them, but they never drive them out.

A Déjà Vu Loop in Time!

Judges 2: 1-10

The LORD'S angel comes from Gilgal to Bochim and says, "I brought you from Egypt led you to the promised land. I told you I would never break my covenant with you, and you are not to make a covenant with those in this land. What have you done? Now I won't drive them out, but they will be a problem for you. Their gods will be a trap for you." When the Israelites hear these words, they weep out loud. So, they name the place Bochim (weeping), and offer a sacrifice to the LORD.

When Joshua dismisses everyone, the Israelites settle on their own property. They serve the LORD during Joshua's life and the next generation of leaders. Joshua dies when he is 110 years old. They bury him in the highlands of Ephraim. (This section seems out of place, as previous book notes his death in Joshua 24:29.)

Another generation comes along who do not know the LORD.

Israel Serves Other Gods

verses 11-15

The Israelites do what is evil in the sight of the LORD. They serve the Baals. They go after other gods and worship them. This angers the LORD. The LORD hands over the Israelites to the raiders who plunder them. The people of Israel are no match for their enemies.

The LORD Raises Up Judges

Then the LORD raises up judges (*leaders*) to rescue them. Yet they do not obey these judges. The LORD is moved by Israel's groanings. More judges are sent, and the LORD would be with the judge, and Israel is rescued. But when the leader dies, the people go after other gods.

The LORD becomes angry and says, "Because you have violated my covenant, I will no longer drive out the people of the nations that Joshua left when he died.

Other Nations in The Land

Judges 3

These are the nations left: the Philistines, Canaanites, Sidonians, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites. The Israelites intermarry with them and serve their gods.

Summary of Judges

Judge # 1: Othniel

The Israelites serve the Baals and the Asherahs. They forget the LORD. God becomes angry and gives them over to the king of Aram for eight years. Then Israel cries to the LORD. The LORD raises up a deliverer: Othniel, Caleb's younger brother. He is from the tribe of Judah.

The LORD's spirit is with Othniel. He defeats the king of Aram. There is peace for forty years, until Othniel dies.

Judge #2: Ehud

Without a leader, the Israelites fall back to their old ways. The LORD puts King Eglon of Moab in power over them. For eighteen years, Israel serves King Eglon. The people cry out to the LORD. The LORD raises up a deliverer: Ehud, a Benjaminite. He is left-handed. Ehud goes to take the tribute payment to King Eglon. Hidden underneath Ehud's clothes are a double-edged sword. He presents the tribute payment to the king, who is a fat man. Then Ehud tells the king he has a secret message for him. King Eglon sends his attendants away to meet privately. As the king stands up from his throne in his second story room, Ehud reaches with his left hand and grabs the hidden sword. He kills the king, locks the doors, and slips out onto the back porch and escapes.

Ehud quickly gathers the Israelites and attacks the Moabites. The LORD gives Israel victory. Over ten thousand Moabites are destroyed. No one escapes. The people of Israel experience peace for eighty years.

Judge # 3: Shamgar

Another leader arises after Ehud. Shamgar strikes down six hundred Philistines with an animal prod. He rescues the people of Israel.

Judge # 4: Deborah *(with a little help from Barak and Jael)*

Judges 4

After Ehud's death, Israel again does evil in the sight of the LORD. The LORD gives them over to King Jabin of Canaan. Jabin reigns in Hazor, while Sisera, his commander, is stationed in Harosheth-ha-goiim. Sisera has charge of nine hundred iron chariots. The people of Israel have been overpowered and oppressed by this army for twenty years.

At this time there is a prophet/leader of Israel named Deborah, wife of Lappidoth. She could normally be found under a palm tree between Ramh and Bethel in the Ephraim highlands, where she settles the disputes of the people.

Deborah sends word to Barak, who lives in Kedesh, of the tribe of Naphtali. She says, "Hasn't the LORD issued you a command? So, assemble ten thousand men from Naphtali and Zebulun at Mount Tabor. I will lure Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army, to bring his chariots against you at the Kishon River. Then I will help you overpower him."

Barak replies, "If you go, I will go. I will not go without you." Deborah answers, "I will go with you, but my presence will show that the LORD is handing Sisera to a woman." Deborah goes to Kedesh and meets

Summary of Judges

Barak, along with ten thousand men from Zebulun and Naphtali. They march on to Mount Tabor, led by Deborah and Barak.

Sisera summons his nine hundred iron chariots and all his soldiers to the Kishon River. The battle is on. The LORD throws Sisera and all the chariots and army into a panic. Sisera gets down from his chariot and flees on foot. The rest of the King Jabin's army are pursued and die by the sword.

Sisera escapes nearby to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite. There are good relations between Hazor's King Jabin and Heber the Kenite. Jael meets Sisera outside her tent and says, "Come in, don't be afraid." He goes in. She hides him under a blanket. Sisera wants her to stand outside by the entrance. But she waits until he is asleep. Jael then drives a stake through Sisera with her hammer. The stake goes through his head and into the ground.

When Barak arrives with the army of Israel, Jael says, "Come, I will show you the man you're after." On that day, God brings down Canaan's King Jabin. It was not long before the men of Israel defeat him completely.

Musical Interlude: Barak And Deborah Duet

Judges 5

At that time, Deborah and Barak sing:

When hair is long in Israel, and people offer themselves – bless the LORD!
Hear King, listen rulers!
I, to the LORD, will sing and make music.

LORD, when you set, when you marched from Edom,
The land shook, the sky poured, the mountains quaked before the LORD, the God of Israel.

In the days of Shamgar, in the days of Jael, caravans ceased.
Villagers disappeared until you, Deborah, arose as a mother in Israel.
When they chose new gods, war came to their city gates.
Among forty thousand men in Israel, no one was ready.
My heart is with Israel's commanders, who willingly offered themselves – bless the LORD!

From Ephraim they set out into the valley, after you, Benjamin, with your people!
From Machir and Zebulun they marched down.
The leaders of Issachar came with Deborah and attached themselves to Barak.

Reuben, why did you stay back?
Gilead, why did you stay on the other side of the Jordan?
Dan, why did you remain with the ships?
Asher stayed by the seacoast, safe and sound.
Zebulun risked death in the battle.
Naphtali did the same.

Summary of Judges

May Jael be blessed above all women.
Sisera asked for water, she provided milk.
She reached out her hand for the stake.
She struck Sisera, and crushed his head.

Sisera's mother looked longingly out her window,
"Why is his chariot taking so long to come home?"

May all your enemies perish like this, LORD!
May you allies be like the sun, rising to its strength.

And the land was peaceful for forty years.

The Cruelty of The Midianites

Judges 6

Then Israel does things that the LORD sees as evil. The LORD hands them over to the Midianites for seven years. Since the Midianites are stronger than Israel, the people of Israel hide in caves and crevices from them. When crops are planted, the Midianites destroy the crops. The men of Midian would come in like a swarm of locusts, leaving nothing for people or animals.

This time when the Israelites cry out the LORD sends them a prophet, who says, "I delivered you from the power of the Egyptians and all your oppressors. I told you, 'You must not worship the gods of the Amorites. Yet you have not obeyed me.'"

Judge # 5: Gideon

Then the LORD's messenger (angel) comes and sits under the oak at Ophrah that belongs to Joash. His son, Gideon, was threshing wheat in a winepress to hide from the Midianites. The messenger appears to him and says, "The LORD is with you, mighty warrior!" Gideon replies, "With due respect, if the LORD is with us, why has all this happened to us? The LORD has abandoned us and allowed Midian to overpower us."

Then the LORD turns to him saying, "You have strength, so go and rescue Israel from the power of Midian. I am sending you." Gideon asks, "How can I rescue Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the youngest in the family." The LORD replies, "Because I am with you! You will defeat Midian as if they are just one person."

Gideon wants a sign. He asks, "Help me believe it is really you. Don't leave until I return with my offering and set it before you." God replies, "I will stay." So, Gideon prepares a young goat with flour. He puts the meat in a basket and the broth in a pot. He brings it to the LORD under the oak.

The God's messenger says, "Set the unleavened bread on this rock, and pour out the broth." He does so. The LORD's messenger reaches out with the tip of the staff in his hand and touches the meat and the

Summary of Judges

bread. Fire comes up and devours the meat and bread. The LORD's messenger disappears. Gideon is afraid now because he realizes he has seen the LORD's messenger face-to-face. But the LORD says, "Peace! Do not be afraid, you won't die."

Gideon builds an altar to the LORD in Ophrah and calls it "The LORD make peace."

Later that night the LORD says to Gideon, "Take your father's bull and second bull that is seven years old. Break down your father's altar to Baal and cut down the Asherah pole beside it. Then build an altar to the LORD on high ground. Take the second bull and offer it as a burnt offering with the wood of the Asherah pole you cut down. So, Gideon takes ten servants and does as God told him. But Gideon does it at night so no one can see him do it.

When the townspeople see what happened to their altar, they investigate until they discover it is Gideon's doing. The people say to Gideon's father, Joash, "Bring out your son so we can execute him." But Joash replies, "Why are you doing what Baal needs to do himself? If he is a god, let him defend himself. On that day Gideon becomes known as Jerubbaal, meaning "Let Baal argue with him," because Gideon tore Baal's altar down.

Gideon Seeks Another Sign (and another)

Later, the Midianites, Amalekites, and other easterners come over and set up camp in the Jezreel Valley. The LORD's spirit comes upon Gideon. Gideon summons the Abiezrites to follow him. He sends messengers to Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali to join him as well.

But Gideon says to God, "If you really want me to rescue Israel, I am putting a wool fleece on the threshing floor. If there is dew only on the fleece and not the ground, I will know you are going to rescue Israel through me." And that is what happened!

Still needing assurance, Gideon says to God, "Don't be angry, but hear me out. Let me have one more test with the fleece. This time, let the fleece be completely dry and the ground covered with dew." And God did so that night.

Battle With Midian

Judges 7

Then Jerubbaal (Gideon) and the people rise early and set up camp near Harod spring. The Midian's camp is north, in the valley by the Moreh hill. The LORD says to Gideon: "You have so many soldiers, it will be tempting to say, 'We saved ourselves.' So, announce, 'Anyone who is afraid or not feeling well may return home.'" Twenty-two thousand people go home.

The LORD says to Gideon says, "There are still too many. Take them down to the water, and I will weed them out some more." So Gideon takes the people to the water at Harod spring. The LORD says, "Set aside those who lap the water with their tongues like a dog. The others are not needed." The number of those who lapped the water was three hundred.

Summary of Judges

The Midians are camped below Gideon in the valley. That night the Lord wakes up Gideon, saying, “Get up and attack. I have handed it over to you. But if you are afraid, go down to the camp with your servant Purah, and you will hear what the enemy is saying. Hopefully, you will get the courage to attack their camp.”

Gideon goes with Purah to the enemy’s outpost. The Midians are spread out like a swarm of locusts. Their camels are too many to count, like the grains of sand on the seashore. When Gideon arrives, he overhears a man telling his friend about a dream. It is about a loaf of barley bread rolling into the Midianite camp. The bread hits a tent and flattens it. The friend replies to the dreamer, “Can this be anything other than Gideon of Israel? God is handing over Midian to him!”

When Gideon hears the dream and the friend’s interpretation, he worships the LORD. Then he goes back to camp and gathers his soldiers. He divides the men into three units of one hundred. Each person is given a trumpet and a torch which is inside a jar. Gideon tells them, “When I blow the trumpet, you blow your trumpet while all of you are surrounding the Midian camp. And then shout, ‘For the LORD and Gideon!’”

Gideon blows his trumpet and the three units of one hundred Israelites do as they were told. The Midianites panic and start fighting each other in the confusion. The enemy flees toward Zererah. The nearby Israelites from Naphtali, Asher, and Manasseh are now called to join in. Gideon sends messengers to the people in the Ephraim highlands to meet up with the Midianites and take control of the Jordan River area as far as Beth-barah. They do as Gideon asked. They capture and kill two Midianite officers, Oreb and Zeeb. Israel chases the Midianites to the other side of the Jordan.

Gideon Holds Grudges

Judges 8

After the battle, the Ephraimites say to Gideon, “Why did you wait until the last moment to ask for our help to defeat the Midianites?” The argument gets heated. Gideon reminds them that Ephraim’s success in capturing Oreb and Zeeb is greater than anything Gideon’s army did before Ephraim joins in. This pacifies the Ephraimites.

Gideon and his band of three hundred come to the Jordan River still chasing two of the Midianite kings, Zebah and Zalmunna. When they get to Succoth, Gideon asks for some food for his men. They refuse. Gideon replies, “When the LORD hands over the Midianite kings to us, I am going to beat you with desert thorns and briars!” When he gets to Penuel, the people have the same response to his request for food. Gideon tells them, “When I return in victory, I will break down your tower!”

In Karkor, Gideon meets up with the two Midianite kings and what is left of their army. One hundred twenty thousand armed men of Midian have already died in the war. Fifteen thousand are left and are camped in Karkor. Gideon marches up the road and Israel surprises the Midianites. The kings, Zebah and Zalmunna are captured. Gideon orders his oldest son, Jether, to stand up and kill the captured kings. But he did not draw his sword because he was so young and afraid. So Gideon stands up and kills the kings himself.

Gideon's Refusal and Unfortunate Request

The Israelites are so grateful to Gideon for the victory over the Midianites, they ask him to become the ruler of Israel, and pass it down through his lineage in the future. Gideon replies, "Neither I nor my sons will rule over you. The LORD rules over you." But Gideon goes on to ask, "Let me have the earrings from all the slain Midianites." They give Gideon earrings that amount to one thousand seven hundred shekels of gold. Gideon fashions a priestly vest out of it and put it in his hometown of Ophrah. All Israel becomes unfaithful there because of it, and it becomes a trap for Gideon and his household.

Midian no longer raises its head as a threat to Israel. The land is peaceful for forty years during the time of Gideon.

Gideon's Death

Jerubbaal, (Gideon) goes home to live with his family. Gideon has seventy sons and many wives. His secondary wife (concubine) bears him a son, and he names him Abimelech. Gideon dies at a good age and is buried in the tomb of his father Joash.

Upon Gideon's death, the Israelites once again fall back into unfaithfulness by worshipping the Baals. They do not remember the LORD their God. They do not act respectfully to the family of Gideon.

The Rise of Abimelech as King

Judges 9

Abimelech, son of Jerubbaal (aka Gideon), goes to Shechem to meet with his mother's brothers. He asks the entire clan, "Do you want all seventy of Jerubbaal's sons to rule over you, or one man?" They decide to follow Abimelech because he is a relative. They give him seventy pieces of silver which he uses to hire worthless and reckless men as his posse. He goes to Ophrah and kills all seventy of his brothers. Only Jotham, the youngest, survives by hiding. The leaders of Shechem make Abimelech king.

Jotham's Famous Fable

When Jotham, the lone survivor of Abimelech's assassinations, learns that Abimelech has made himself king, he goes to Mount Gerizim, which is next to Shechem. From the mountain top he shouts out a story: "Once upon a time the trees anoint a king over themselves. They say to the olive tree, 'Be our king!' But the olive tree replies, 'Should I stop producing oil, which honors gods and humans, just to sway over the trees?'"

So, the trees ask the fig tree to be king. The fig tree replies, 'Should I stop producing my delicious fruit, just to sway over the trees?'"

Then the trees ask the vine to be king. The vine replies, 'Should I stop providing my wine which makes gods and humans happy, just to sway over the trees?'"

Finally, the trees ask the thornbush to be king. The thornbush replies, 'If you truly want to anoint me king over you, come and take shelter in my shade; otherwise let fire come out of the thornbush and burn up the cedars of Lebanon.'"

Summary of Judges

You have made Abimelech king. If you have acted faithfully toward Jerubbaal, then be happy with your new king. But if not, let fire come out from Abimelech and burn up the leaders of Shechem; and let fire come out from Shechem and burn up Abimelech.”

Then Jotham runs away. He flees to Beer for fear of his brother Abimelech.

The Fall of Abimelech’s Monarchy

Abimelech rules three years. Then God stirs up bad blood between him and the leaders of Shechem who anointed him. This occurs because of the violence Abimelech committed against his seventy brothers. The leaders of Shechem started robbing travelers who passed by their town. Abimelech finds out about this.

One day, Gaal, Ebe’s son, passes through Shechem with his family. The leaders of Shechem shift their allegiance to Gaal. They go into the field and celebrate. They enter their god’s temple and make fun of Abimelech. Gaal asks the leaders of Shechem, “Did not Jerubbaal (Gideon) once serve the men of Hamor, Shechem’s father? Why are you now serving his son? Let me be in charge and we will march against Abimelech!”

Zebel, the city ruler of Shechem, becomes angry with the words of Gaal. He warns Abimelech of the rebellion. Abimelech and his men travel and set up an ambush around Shechem in four companies. When Gaal sees that the city is surrounded, he is worried. Zebel says to him, “Where is your big talk now? March out and fight the man you mocked!”

Gaal marches out with the other leaders of Shechem and fights. Abimelech routs Gaal’s men and Gaal runs away. The next day the men of Shechem come out and fight again. Abimelech captures the city and kills its people. Then he levels the city and scatters salt over it. Some of Shechem residents are found hiding in the El-berith temple. Abimelech burns the tower and temple, killing one thousand men and women.

Abimelech marches on to Thebez and captures it. But a number of the residents take refuge in a strong tower in the city. Abimelech approaches the tower to burn it like he did in Shechem. But a woman drops a millstone on Abimelech’s head and cracks his skull. He quickly cries out to his servant nearby, “Draw your sword and kill me. Don’t let it be said of me, ‘A woman killed him.’” So, his servant stabs him. When the Israelites see that Abimelech is dead, they all go home.

Thus, God pays back Abimelech for the evil he had done to his father by killing his seventy brothers. God also pays back the people of Shechem for their evil. The curse of Jotham, Jerubbaal’s son, had come upon them.

Judge # 6: Tola

Judges 10

A new leader arises to rescue Israel. Tola is the son of Puah and a man of Issachar. He lives in Shamir in the Ephraim highlands. He rules for twenty-three years. Then he dies and is buried in Shamir.

Judge # 7: Jair

Jair arises from Gilead and leads Israel for twenty-two years. He has thirty sons who rode on thirty donkeys and controlled thirty towns in the land of Gilead. When Jair dies, he is buried in Kamon.

Israels Unfaithfulness Produces Ammonite Oppression

The Israelites do things that are evil in the eyes of the LORD. They serve Baals and the Astartes, as well as the gods of Aram, Sidon, Moab, the Ammonites, and the Philistines. They do not serve the LORD. The LORD becomes angry with the Israelites, handing them over to the Philistines and the Ammonites.

For the next fifteen years, the Ammonites beat and bully the Israelites who live on both sides of the Jordan River.

The Israelites cry out to the LORD, “We have sinned against you by forgetting you and serving the Baals.” The Lord replies, “I have rescued you so many times from the Egyptians, Amorites, Ammonites, Philistines, Sidonians, Amalekites and Maonites. Each time you go away and serve other gods. I will not do it anymore. Cry on the shoulders of the gods you have chosen. Let them rescue you.”

“We have sinned,” the people of Israel respond. “Do to us whatever you see as right, but please save us this time.” They put away their foreign gods and serve the LORD. The LORD can no longer stand to see Israel suffer.

The Ammonites bring out their army and make camp in Gilead. The Israelites gather and set up camp at Mizpah. Gilead’s rulers say to each other, “Whoever is willing to attack the Ammonites will become the leader of those living in Gilead.”

Judge # 8: Jephthah

Judges 11

Now Jephthah the Gileadite is a mighty warrior. His father was Gilead, who was married but had Jephthah by a prostitute. When the wife bears others sons for Gilead, those sons grow up and drive Jephthah away from home. He runs to the land of Tob. Worthless men gather around Jephthah and become his posse.

When the Ammonites make war with Israel, Gilead’s elders go to the land of Tob and bring Jephthah back. They say, “Come be our commander so we can fight against the Ammonites.” Jephthah replies, “You hated me and drove me out. Now you want me to get you out of trouble. If you bring me back to fight the Ammonites and the LORD gives me victory, I alone will be your leader.” The elders agree.

Summary of Judges

Jephthah sends messengers to the Ammonite king, saying, “Why do you make war in my land?”

The king answers, “When the Israelites were coming up from Egypt (*with Moses*), they seized my land. Now give it back, peacefully.”

Jephthah reminds the king, “Israel did not seize your land or the land of the Moabites. Israel simply asked the king of Edom to let them pass through peacefully. He refused. The Israelites then asked the king of Moab to let them pass through peacefully. He refused. Then the Israelites asked the Amorite king and he refused as well. The LORD, Israel’s God, handed over the Amorite king to Israel. The land you are referring to was given to Israel by their God. You should possess what Chemosh your god has given to you, and let Israel possess what their god has given to them. I have not done you wrong, but you are doing me wrong by making war against me. Let the LORD, who is the true judge, decide today between the Israelites and the Ammonites!”

But the Ammonite king does not listen to Jephthah. War is imminent.

A Well-Intended but Not Well Thought-Our Promise

The LORD’s spirit comes upon Jephthah. He passes through Gilead and crosses over to the Ammonites. He makes a solemn promise to the LORD: “If you give me a victory over the Ammonites, then whatever comes out the doors of my house when I return home will be given over to the LORD. I will sacrifice it as a burned offering.”

Jephthah crosses over to fight the Ammonites, and the LORD hands Jephthah a great victory. But when Jephthah returns home to Mizpah, his daughter is the first to come and greet him with tambourines and dancing. She is an only child. When he sees her, he tears his clothes and says, “Oh no! My daughter! You are my agony. For I opened my mouth to the LORD, and I can’t take it back.”

The daughter reminds him that he needs to keep promises, especially one made to the LORD. She only asks for one thing: “Hold off your promise for two months and let me be with my friends, knowing that I will not live to have children.” Jephthah allows her the time she asks. Then he keeps his promise.

This gives rise to a tradition in Israel. It is a custom that every year Israelite daughters go away to recount the story of Jephthah’s daughter.

Jephthah defeats the Ephraimites

Judges 12

When the Ephraimites learn that Jephthah won a great victory over the Ammonites, they are upset that Jephthah did not include them in the battle. They inform Jephthah that they are going to burn down his house. Jephthah gathers the men of Gilead and fight the Ephraimites. The men of Gilead gain control of the Jordan river crossing-points into Ephraim. When anyone tries to cross over, the Gileadites ask, "Are you an Ephraimite?" If the stranger denies it, they are asked to say shibboleth. If they cannot pronounce it correctly, they are killed. Forty-two thousand Ephraimites are killed using this tactic.

Jephthah leads Israel for six years. He dies and is buried somewhere around Gilead.

Judge # 9: Ibzan

Next, Ibzan arises from Bethlehem to lead Israel. He has thirty sons and thirty daughters. He marries his thirty daughters to those outside his clan. He brings in thirty young women from outside his clan for his son. He leads Israel for seven years. He dies and is buried in Bethlehem.

Judge #10: Elon

Elon from Zebulun leads Israel for ten years. He dies and is buried in Aijalon in the land of Zebulun.

Judge # 11: Abdon

Abdon, Hillel's son from Pirathon, leads Israel for eight years. He has forty sons and thirty grandsons who ride on seventy donkeys. He dies and is buried in the highland of the land of Ephraim.

Judge # 12: Samson

Judges 13

The Israelites once again do what is evil in the eyes of the LORD. He hands them over to the Philistines for forty years.

Birth of Samson

A Danite named Manoah from the city of Zorah has a wife who is unable to become pregnant. The Lord's messenger (angel?) appears to his wife and says, "You are now pregnant with a son! Be careful not to drink wine or brandy or anything unclean. Don't allow a razor to shave his head. He will be a Nazarite for God from birth. He will begin the rescue from the Philistines."

The woman tells Manoah of her visitor. Manoah asks the LORD, "Please let the man of God whom you sent come back once more and teach us how to raise the boy to be born." God listens and sends the messenger once more to the woman. She runs to get her husband. The messenger repeats to Manoah everything he had told her wife earlier. Manoah then encourages the messenger to stay so that a young goat can be prepared for a meal. The messenger replies, "I will not eat your food. If you prepare an entirely burned offering, offer it to the LORD." Manoah asks the messenger's name. The messenger responds, "You could not understand the name."

Summary of Judges

Manoah and his wife take the goat and grain offering and place them on a rock to the LORD. As they watch, the flame from the altar goes up to the sky. They fall face down in awe. Manoah says, "We are going to die because we have seen God!" The wife responds, "If the LORD wanted to kill us, he would not have accepted the offering or told us these things."

The wife gives birth to a son and names him Samson. The LORD blesses the boy when he is grown. The LORD's spirit begins to move him when he is in Mahaneh-dan.

Samson Marries a Philistine

Judges 14

Samson travels to Timnah. A Philistine woman catches his eye. Samson goes home and tells his parents. He says, "Get her for me as a wife!" The parents want Samson to find someone among their own relatives or the Israelites, not from the uncircumcised Philistines. But his parents are unaware that the LORD is behind this embarrassing request. The LORD is looking for an opening with the Philistines.

Samson takes his parents to meet the woman he is attracted to in Timnah. In the vineyards near Timnah a young lion starts to attack Samson who is out of view from his parents. The LORD's spirit takes over Samson, and he tears apart the animal with his bare hands. He does not tell his parents what happened. He goes on to meet with the woman he wants to marry.

A Bittersweet Riddle

After a while, Samson comes back again to marry her. He passes by the place where the lion attacked and there is a swarm of bees with honey inside the lion's carcass. He scoops up the honey and enjoys it on his journey to Timnah. He shares some of it with his parents.

His father travels down to meet the woman and Samson puts on a feast. The townspeople select thirty companions to join in the feast. Samson says to them, "Let me tell you a riddle. If you can figure it out in seven days, I will give you thirty linen robes and thirty sets of clothes. If you cannot figure it out, then you must give me the same." He says to them this riddle:

"Out of the eater there came something to eat.
Out of the strong there came something sweet."

For three days the companions struggle with the riddle. They come to Samson's wife and ask, "Seduce your husband and find out the riddle and then tell us. Or we will set fire to you and your household." So, Samson's wife cries on his shoulder and begs for the answer to the riddle. After constant nagging, on the seventh day, Samson tells her the secret.

The townspeople then answer the riddle correctly by asking (*like Jeopardy!*),

"What is sweeter than honey?
What is stronger than a lion?"

Summary of Judges

Samson, replies,
“If you had not plowed with my heifer,
you would not have figured out my riddle!”

Then the LORD’s spirit rushes over him, and he goes down to Ashkelon. He kills thirty of their men, strips them of their clothes, and brings those clothes to the companions who stole the answer to the riddle. In anger, Samson returns home to his parent’s household. Samson’s wife marries one of the thirty companions who attended the feast.

Samson Attacks the Philistines

Judges 15

Later, during the wheat harvest Samson goes back to Philistine territory to visit his wife. Her father does not allow Samson to go in and tells him that since he had abandoned her, the father gave her in marriage to one of his companions. The father then offers him a younger sister, but Samson becomes angry and walks away.

Samson catches three hundred foxes. He torches their tails and releases them into the fields of the Philistines. The field grain, the stacked grain, the vineyards, and olive orchards are all burned up. The Philistines learn that Samson did this after he learned his wife had married another. The Philistines then go and burn her and her father to death. Samson vows revenge and then retreats to a cave at Etam.

The Philistines march to Judah with armed men to take Samson prisoner. Three thousand men of Judah travel to the cave in the rock at Etam and find Samson. They are going to turn him over to the Philistines to avoid a war. Samson agrees to go with his fellow Judahites as long as they do not participate in what the Philistines want to do with him. So, they tie him up with new ropes and take him to the Philistines who are waiting at Lehi.

When the Philistines see him, they come after him. The LORD’s spirit rushes over Samson, and he breaks free from the ropes. He finds a donkey’s jawbone on the ground, using it to attack the Philistines at Lehi. He kills a thousand men that day. The place at Lehi became known as Jawbone Hill.

Now Samson is thirsty. He calls upon the LORD to help quench his thirst which was brought upon by the LORD’s spirit rushing upon him to defeat the Philistines. So God splits open the hollow rock in Lehi, and water flows from it. Samson drinks and is refreshed.

Samson leads Israel for twenty years during the time of the Philistines.

Samson And the Prostitute

Judges 16

Samson goes on a trip to Gaza (*in Philistine territory*). He sees a prostitute and has sex with her. The people of Gaza find out that Samson is in town. They set up an ambush to get him in the morning. But Samson rises in the middle of the night. He escapes by grabbing the doors of the city gate, along with the gateposts, and pulls them up. He places them on his shoulders and carries them up to the hill near Hebron, in Judah.

Summary of Judges

Samson And Delilah

Later, Samson falls in love with a Philistine woman in the Sorek Valley named Delilah. The rulers of the Philistines entice her to use her connection to find out what gives him strength and what will cause him to lose it. She agrees.

Delilah asks Samson for his secret. He replies, "If I am tied up with seven fresh bowstrings that are still wet, I will lose my special powers." Delilah ties him up with seven wet bowstrings, then gives the signal for the Philistines to ambush him. But he easily breaks the strings, and they retreat.

Delilah begs him again to tell the truth. He tells her that new ropes make him weak. She ties him up with new ropes, alerts the Philistines, and then Samson breaks free of the ropes. They retreat again. She begs again, and he says that he can be weakened by weaving the seven braids of his hair into the fabric on a loom. She tries this, and again he wakes from his sleep and frees himself.

In desperation, Delilah says, "How can you say, 'I love you,' when you don't trust me?" Finally, he tells her, "No razor has ever touched my head. I have been a Nazirite for God since birth. If my head is shaved, my strength will leave.

Delilah summons the Philistines to come one more time. She gets Samson to fall asleep on her lap. She has a man come in and shave off Samson's seven braids of hair. Then Delilah calls out, "Samson, the Philistines are inside!" He wakes up but does not realize the LORD has left him. The Philistines capture him, put out his eyes, and take him to Gaza. They bind him with chains. He is put to work at the grinding mill in the prison. The hair on his head begins to grow back.

Samson's Death

The rulers gather the Philistines to celebrate and offer sacrifices to their god Dagon. They rejoice that Samson is no longer a threat. During the celebration, they have Samson come out in chains for all the people to see. Samson says to the man leading him by hand, "Put me where I can feel the pillars that hold up the temple, so I can lean on them."

Now the temple is filled with thousands of people. Samson calls out, "LORD God, make me strong just once more." Then Samson grabs the two central pillars and pushes against them. Samson says, "Let me die with the Philistines!" The temple collapses, killing all who were in it. It turns out he kills more people in his death than during his life.

Samson's brothers travel down and carry his body back home. The brothers bury him in the tomb of his father Manoah. He had ruled Israel for twenty years.

Micah's Sanctuary and The Levite Priest

Judges 17

Once there was a man in Ephraim named Micah. He tells his mother, "I am the person who stole eleven hundred pieces of silver some time ago. I heard you declare a curse on the one who took it. I want to give it back to you."

The mother replies, "May the LORD bless you!" Micah's mother takes the silver and devotes it to the LORD. Two hundred pieces of silver are used to make a sculpted image and a molded image for her son and placed in his house. Now the son has his own sanctuary. He makes a priestly vest (*ephod*) and divine images (*terafim*). He appoints one of his sons to be his priest.

In this period there is no king in Israel; each person does what they think is right.

There is a young Levite from Bethlehem in Judah, who is travelling around as an immigrant. He comes to Micah's house. Micah asks him to stay in his home and be a father and a priest to him. The Levite agrees to the job. Micah secretly hopes that the LORD will give bless him now for having a Levite as his priest.

The Tribe of Dan Decides to Move

Judges 18

In these days there is no king in Israel. The tribe of Dan is searching for new land to live in (*see Joshua 19*). The Danites send five men to spy on prospective land. On the way, the spies make it to the Ephraim highlands and spend the night in Micah's house. While there, they recognize the accent of the young Levite and know that he is not from these parts. When they learn that he is Micah's priest, they ask the Levite to find out from God if they will be successful on their spying mission. The priest tells them that the LORD is watching over them. They can go in peace.

When the spies arrive in Laish, they see that it is a peaceful area. The five spies return home with a good report. The Danite now send six hundred armed men. On the journey, the spies tell the six hundred other Danites that there is a man named Micah who has his own sanctuary with sculpted and molded images. When they get to the area of Micah's house, the armed men stand at the gate entrance. The five spies enter the house and take the religious items. The Levite priest confronts them. The Danites offer a chance for the Levite to be the priest of the Danite tribe in their new land, rather than a priest of one in Ephraim. The priest goes with the Danites. Micah strongly objects to what is happening, but there is nothing he can do to stop them.

The Danites Take the City of Laish

The Danites take the religious items that Micah had made, and the Levite priest, with them to the city of Laish. They burn the city and kill the people. They rebuild the city and settle in it. They rename the city Dan, after their ancestor who was one of Jacob's sons. They set up the sculpted image for themselves. It remains up the whole time that God's sanctuary was in Shiloh. Jonathan, son of Gershom and grandson of Moses (? or Manasseh?) becomes the priest. Jonathon's male descendants will be priests for the Danites until the time of the exile (*that is, the fall of the Northern Kingdom in 722 B.C.E.*)

A RUTHLESS ENDING TO A TROUBLING TIME/BOOK **Judges 19-21**

A Levite, His Woman, And Her Father

Judges 19

In the days when there is no king in Israel, a certain Levite is living as an immigrant in the far corners of the Ephraim highlands. He has a secondary wife (concubine) from Bethlehem in Judah. The secondary wife leaves him and returns to her father's house in Bethlehem. After four months, the husband and a servant travel to Bethlehem to convince her to come back. The father is happy to see him. He insists the husband stay overnight. The father talks him into staying three more days.

On the fourth day, the husband prepares to go back to his own place. The father persists, and the husband stays again. On the fifth day, the father tries again to get him to stay another night, but the husband is unwilling. The Levite husband, his servant, and his secondary wife finally head home toward the Ephraim highlands.

The three make it to Jebus (Jerusalem) near dark. The servant suggests they stay at Jebus overnight, but the Levite master says, "Jerusalem is a city of foreigners. We will travel to Gibeah." When they get to Gibeah, they sit down at the city square. No one offers to take them home to spend the night.

From Inhospitability to Rape and Murder at Gibeah

Later that evening, an old man is coming home from work in the fields. He is from the Ephraim highlands, but living as an immigrant in Gibeah, part of the territory of the tribe of Benjamin. When he sees the travelers stranded in the city square, he asks where they are from. The Levite says, "We are travelling from Bethlehem in Judah to the Ephraim highlands. No one took us in for the night. We have everything else we need with us." The old man responds, "You can stay with me, and I will take care of everything else you need as well."

While they are relaxing at his home, men from the city, who are perverse, surround the house and demand that the old man send the male guest out, so they can have sex with him. The owner of the house goes outside and begs them not to do this disgraceful thing. He even offers his own daughter and the Levite's concubine (secondary wife) to appease them. The men refuse to listen to him.

The Levite grabs his secondary wife and sends her outside to them. They rape her and abuse her all night until morning. They finally let her be as dawn approaches.

At daybreak, the woman collapses at the door of the man's house. When her husband gets up, he opens the door to prepare to set out on his journey. His secondary wife is lying at the entranceway with her hands clutching the doorframe. She is dead. He lays her body across his donkey and goes home to the Ephraim highlands. He gets a knife from his house and chops her body, limb by limb, into twelve pieces. He sends them to all the areas of Israel. Everyone who sees the body portions says, "Something must be done! This has never happened since we left Egypt."

Israelite Civil War with the Benjaminites

Judges 20

Summary of Judges

Except for the Benjaminites, all the Israelites from Dan to Beersheba on both sides of the Jordan River gather as one body in the LORD's presence at Mizpah. They agree not to return home until this tragedy is handled. Each tribe will send a tenth of their fighting age men to enact justice on the men of Gibeah, and on the tribe of Benjamin if they do not hand the guilty men of Gibeah to the rest of the Israelites.

Instead of handing over the men of Gibeah, the tribe of Benjamin prepares for war against the other Israelite tribes. They call up twenty-six thousand men. The Israelites call up four hundred thousand men. Before the battle, the Israelites march to Bethel and inquire of God which tribe should lead the way in the war? The LORD says, "Let Judah be first."

The next morning the first battle begins. The Benjaminites strike down twenty-two thousand men of Israel that day. The Israelites weep before the LORD. God tells them to march against the Benjaminites again the next day. The Benjaminites kill another eighteen thousand Israelite men. The Israelite troops go back to Bethel and weep even more. They fast for a day. They offer burnt offerings and well-being offerings to the LORD. The ark containing the covenant is there. Phinehas, the grandson of Aaron, enters the tabernacle and inquires of God if they should give up fighting the tribe of Benjamin. The LORD answers, "March up, for I will hand them to you tomorrow."

The Israelites spend several days setting up ambushes around Gibeah. On the third day they come out to fight as before. Israel draws the Benjaminite troops away from the city of Gibeah. With the city now largely unprotected, an ambush unit enters the city. These ten thousand Israelites kill the people and destroy the city. The Israelites main force re-form their battle lines at Baal-tamar. This causes the Benjaminite troops to face the city and see it burning down. The main army chases the Benjaminite troops and massacres them. The Benjaminites lose twenty-five thousand one hundred fighting men that day. The Israelites also burn the cities of the rest of the Benjaminites. Every city, every building, all the people, and their animals are destroyed.

But wait, Theres More!

Judges 21

The Israelites had earlier made a pledge at Mizpah, "None of us will allow his daughter to marry a Benjaminite. Doing so will be punishable by death. Now the men of Israel are back at Bethel letting what they have done sink in. They cry out, "LORD God, today one of our tribes will be missing from Israel. Why has this happened?" The next day, they offer burnt offerings and well-being sacrifices on a newly built altar at Bethel.

Now they have a change of heart. They ask, "Were there any cities who did not send anyone to fight with us against the Benjaminites?" Sure enough, there is one. No one from Jabesh-gilead had participated in this civil war.

The gathered community of Israel send twelve thousand warriors with these orders: "Go kill all the men, all the children, as well as all the woman who have slept with a man." The warriors do as they are told. Jabesh-gilead is destroyed. Now only four hundred young women remain alive in the city. The Israelites bring these four hundred to the camp at Shiloh in the land of Canaan.

Summary of Judges

Next, the Israelites send a message offering peace to the few remaining Benjaminites, who are all men. The men are allowed to leave their base camp and return home. Israel gives the Benjaminite men the four hundred women from Jabesh-gilead. But there are not enough.

The people of Israel have compassion on Benjamin. They want to do more but the Israelites are bound by the curse they made to not offer their own daughters. They come up with a plan. There is an annual festival to the LORD in Shiloh. Israel tells the Benjaminites: "Go and hide in the vineyards during the festival at Shiloh. When you see the young women of Shiloh perform their dances, come out from the vineyards, and catch a wife for yourself from among them. When their fathers or brothers come to us to protest, we will tell the fathers or brothers to accept the arrangement, since we did not get enough wives for each of them in the battle. You will not actually 'give' the women to the Benjaminite men, so you will not really be breaking your oath."

The Benjaminites go along with the plan. They take the women they need from the dancers they catch. After the festival everyone from all the tribes goes to their homes on the allotted tribal land.

During this time there is no king in Israel; everyone does whatever he wants, what is right in his own eyes.

Summary of Ruth

Love, Loyalty, and Redemption in a Time of Trials

Naomi's Family in Moab

Ruth 1

During the time of the judges, there is a famine in Canaan. An Israelite family in Bethlehem travels from Canaan to nearby Moab to escape the lack of food.

The father, Elimelech (*God is my king*), dies unexpectedly. The mother, Naomi (*pleasant*), is now a single widow trying to raise their two sons, Mahlon (*sickly*) and Chilion (*weak*).

The two sons grow up and marry Moabite women, named Orpah (*fawn, cloud*) and Ruth (*companion*). Ten years later, both sons die. Naomi is now an Israelite widow living in Moab with two widowed Moabite daughters-in-law.

Ruth's Loyalty to Naomi

Ruth 1

Naomi hears that the LORD has paid attention to his people who are in Canaan. The land is producing grain again. She decides to leave Moab and return home to Bethlehem. Naomi says to her daughters-in-law, "I am too old to find another husband. Even if I do, you will not want to wait that long for any future sons of mine to become old enough to marry you."

Orpah and Ruth weep with sorrow as they decide what they will do. Orpah finally kisses her mother-in-law and heads back to her own family. But Ruth clings to Naomi, saying,

*"Do not persuade me to leave you, or not follow you.
For wherever you go, I will go, and wherever you live, I will live.
Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God.
Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried."*

With that, Naomi and Ruth travel until they arrive in Bethlehem. The townspeople are excited to see Naomi return after being gone for a long time. The local women say, "Can this be Naomi?" Naomi answers, "Don't call me Naomi (*pleasant*). Call me Mara (*bitter*), for the Almighty has made me very bitter. I went away full and came back empty. I am humiliated."

Thankfully, Naomi and Ruth have arrived in Bethlehem just as the first barley harvest is starting.

Ruth Meets Boaz

Ruth 2

Ruth asks her mother-in-law, "Naomi, will you let me go into the harvest fields and gather fallen grain from those who will allow me to do so?" Naomi says, "Go ahead."

Ruth enters a field that happens to be in the portion of land belonging to Boaz. It turns out that Boaz is a relative of Naomi on her husband's (*Elimelech's*) side of the family. Boaz is a man of prominence and noble character. When he learns that Ruth is Naomi's daughter-in-law, Boaz says to Ruth, "Don't go to any other man's fields, but stay close to my female servants. See which field they are harvesting and

Summary of Ruth

follow them. I have heard how loyal you are to Naomi since your husband's death. May the LORD reward you."

At mealtime for the workers in the field, Boaz tells Ruth, "Come over here and join me." When she leaves to return to work, Boaz instructs his men to let Ruth even gather from among the bundles. Ruth returns home that evening with 26 quarts of barley. She also shares with Naomi her leftovers from lunch. Naomi reveals to Ruth that Boaz is a close relative, one of the kinsman-redeemers.

Ruth continues to live with her mother-in-law and gathers barley every day in the fields of Boaz.

A Match-Making Mission: "Operation Threshing Floor"

Ruth 3

Naomi says to Ruth, "I want to find security for you, so that you will be taken care of in the future. Boaz is a relative. He has been nice to you and is one of the family redeemers. Tonight, he will be winnowing barley on the threshing floor. Go wash, put on perfume, and dress in your best clothes. Then go down to the threshing floor and hide until Boaz is finished. After he lies down and goes to sleep, go uncover his feet and lie down. He will tell you what to do."

Ruth goes down to the threshing floor and does what Naomi told her to do. When Boaz wakes up in the middle of the night, he turns, and there is a woman lying next to him at his feet!

"Who are you?" Boaz asks. "I am your servant Ruth," she answers. "Spread the corner of your garment over me, since you are a kinsman-redeemer for our family."

"The LORD bless you, my daughter," he replies. This is even greater kindness than you have shown before: You have not run after the younger men. And now I will do for you all that you ask. Although it is true that I am a redeemer for the family, there is another who is even more closely related. Stay here for the night, and tomorrow I will learn his intentions on the matter."

Ruth lays at his feet until morning but gets up early. Boaz says to her, "No one must know that a woman came to the threshing floor." Before she leaves, he pours six measures of barley into her shawl to take for Naomi. As she walks home, Boaz heads into town.

When Naomi hears what Boaz said, she says to Ruth, "Wait here until you find out what happens. Boaz will not rest until this matter is settled."

Boaz Marries Ruth

Ruth 4

Boaz goes up to the town gate. As he sits down, the other kinsman-redeemer passes by. Boaz calls him over. Then Boaz brings ten elders to the city gate as witnesses. He says to the other redeemer, "Naomi, who has returned from Moab, is selling the land that belonged to her husband Elimelek. Do you want to redeem it?" "I will redeem it," the kinsman says.

Then Boaz says, "Buying the land also means you acquire Ruth the Moabite, the dead man's widow, in order to maintain the name of the dead man's property." The kinsman redeemer says, "In that case I cannot redeem it. It may endanger my own estate. You should redeem it."

Summary of Ruth

(In those days, the redemption and transfer of property required one party to take off a sandal and give it to the other.) So, the kinsman redeemer takes off his sandal and says to Boaz, “Buy it yourself.” And Boaz buys the land and acquires the widowed Ruth.

Then the elders and other people at the gate respond, “We are witnesses. May the woman coming into your home be like Rachel and Leah. May you have a good standing in Ephrathah (Bethlehem) and be famous. May the offspring the LORD gives you be like that of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah.”

Naomi Gains a “Son”- In- Law Through Ruth

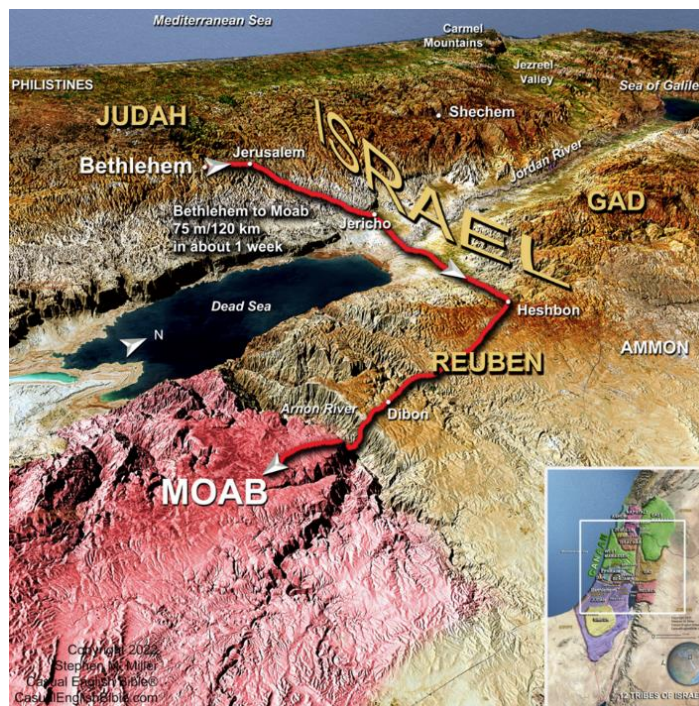
Boaz and Ruth marry. The LORD enables Ruth to conceive and bear a son. Naomi takes the child in her arms and cares for him. The women living there say, “Naomi has a son.”

The child is named Obed (*servant of God, worshiper, follower*).

Obed’s Connection to the Future King David

Perez was the father of Hezron,
Hezron was the father of Ram,
Ram was the father of Amminadab,
Amminadab was the father of Nahshon,
Nashon was the father of Salmon,

Salmon was the father of Boaz,
Boaz IS the father of Obed,
Obed WILL BE the father of Jesse,
Jesse WILL BE the father of [King] David.



Summary of I Samuel

From Faithful Beginnings to a Kingdom United

The Birth of Samuel

I Samuel 1

In the highlands of Ephraim there lives a man from Ramathaim whose name is Elkanah (*God has purchased/created*). He has two wives, Hannah (*favor/grace*) and Peninnah (*pearl*). Hannah is childless. Elkanah takes the family to Shiloh every year to worship and offer sacrifices at the tabernacle. Some of the sacrifices are able to be eaten by the family afterwards.

Elkanah only gives a small portion of the sacrifice to Hannah because the LORD has kept her from conceiving a child. Each year Peninnah makes fun of Hannah. Each year Hannah cries in sadness. Elkanah tries to console her. “Why won’t you eat? Aren’t I worth more to you than ten sons?”

One day after the meal in Shiloh, Hannah gets up to present herself to the LORD. Eli the priest sees her pouring out her heart to the LORD, but thinks she is drunk. Hannah explains to the priest that she is not drunk, but worried and troubled. (She does not reveal why she is troubled.) Eli responds, “Then go in peace, and may the God of Israel give you what you ask.”

When Elkanah brings the family home to Ramah, he has sex with Hannah. The LORD remembers her. Hannah conceives and gives birth to a son. She names him Samuel, which means “I asked the LORD for him.”

The Dedication of Samuel

When Elkanah and the family go up to make the annual sacrifice that year, Hannah does not go. She tells Elkanah that she wants to present her son later to the LORD and offer him permanently as a Nazirite. She stays home with the child until he is weaned. Then she takes a three-year-old bull, an ephah of flour, a jar of wine, and brings him to the tabernacle at Shiloh. The priests slaughter the bull, and then bring Samuel to Eli.

“Excuse me, sir!” Hannah says. “I am the woman who stood here praying to the LORD months ago. I was praying for this boy, and the LORD gave me what I asked. As long as he lives, he is now dedicated to the LORD.” Hannah and the priest worshipped there before the LORD.

The Song of Hannah

I Samuel 2

Hannah prays:

*My heart rejoices in the LORD, because I rejoice in your deliverance.
God raises the poor from the just, lifts the needy from the garbage pile.
The wicked die in darkness because no one succeeds by strength alone.
God judges his enemies from the heavens and the far corners of the earth.
May God give strength to his king and raise up the anointed one.*

Then Elkanah goes home to Ramah, but the boy serves the LORD under Eli the priest.

Eli's Corrupt Sons

I Samuel 2

The two sons of Eli are despicable men who do not know the LORD. Hophni and Phinehas each take advantage of the people making offerings by taking most of the meat offerings for themselves.

Samuel is serving the LORD even as a child. His mother Hannah takes a new robe to him every year when she comes with Elkanah to offer the annual sacrifice. Eli would bless Elkanah and Hannah: "May the LORD replace this child Samuel that has been given to the LORD." The LORD pays attention, and she gives birth through the years to three more sons and two daughters. Meanwhile the boy Samuel grows up in the LORD's service.

Eli is getting old, but he hears what his sons are doing to the Israelites, including how they had sex with the women who served at the tent's entrance. He confronts them, but they would not obey their father. The LORD wants to kill them. Meanwhile, Samuel is growing up and is well liked by both the LORD and the people.

A man of God comes to Eli and says, "The LORD has revealed this to me: I had intended that your household would serve me forever. But your sons have dishonored me. The days are coming soon when I will eliminate both your children. The family tree will be left empty. Your sons, Hophni and Phinehas, will both die on the same day. Then I will establish a trustworthy priest to care for my tabernacle.

The Call of Samuel

I Samuel 3

The word of the LORD was rare in those days, and visions were few and far between. Eli's eyes are now weak. One night the lamp of the tabernacle is still burning. Samuel is lying down in the LORD's temple where the Ark of the Covenant resides.

The LORD calls out to Samuel. Samuel hurries to Eli's bedside and says, "I'm here." Eli responds, "I did not call you." Samuel goes back to bed. Again, the LORD calls Samuel, and again Samuel rushes to Eli. Eli responds again, "I did not call you." This happens a third time. Then Eli realizes that it must be the LORD who is calling the boy. Eli instructs Samuel to lie down again, and if he hears his name this time, say, "Speak, LORD. Your servant is listening."

The LORD comes into the room and stands there, calling, "Samuel, Samuel!" Samuel says, "Speak. Your servant is listening."

Summary of I Samuel

The LORD says to Samuel, "I am about to punish Eli's family forever because of the wrongs Eli's sons did and because Eli knew and did nothing about it. This cannot be reconciled by sacrifice or by offering."

Samuel lays there until morning, then opens the doors of the LORD's house. Samuel is afraid to tell Eli what the LORD told him, but Eli insists. After hearing what Samuel was told, Eli says, "He is the LORD. He will do as he pleases."

So, Samuel grows up and the LORD is with him. All Israel from Dan to Beer-sheba knows that Samuel is trustworthy as the LORD's prophet. The LORD continues to appear at Shiloh.

The Capture of The Ark of The Covenant

I Samuel 4

The Philistines gather for war against Israel. Armed men of Israel camp at Ebenezer, while the Philistines make camp at Aphek. When the battle ensues, Israel is defeated by the Philistines. The men of Israel question why they were defeated. The elders respond, "Let's bring the chest containing the LORD's covenant with us into battle." The people send a group to Shiloh and bring to the camp the ark of the covenant. Eli's two sons Hophni and Phinehas are with the chest. When the camp sees the ark, they let out such a loud shout it shakes the ground. The Philistines investigate what caused the commotion and learn that the sacred ark with the covenant is in the Hebrew camp. The Philistines are now scared that the Hebrew God will destroy them. The leaders of the Philistines must motivate the men to fight. "Pull yourselves together and act like men!" they proclaim.

The Philistine leaders rally their troops to victory. Thirty thousand men of Israel die in battle. God's chest containing the covenant is taken, and Eli's two sons are killed.

That same day, a Benjaminite runs from the battlefield back to Shiloh. As he arrives, Eli is anxiously sitting in a chair beside the road near the tabernacle, concerned about the ark. The Benjaminite tells those in the city the bad news and the whole city cries out. Then he runs to tell Eli. (Eli is 98 years old with poor vision.)

The messenger tells him, "The army suffered a massive defeat. Your two sons have died. And the ark of God has been stolen." At the mention of God's chest, Eli falls backwards off his chair, breaks his neck and dies. Eli had judged Israel for forty years.

The wife of Phinehas, Eli's son, is pregnant and suddenly goes into labor upon hearing the news of the defeat. She will not survive the labor, as she is about to die, she is told she has given birth to a son. For her last words, she names her son Ichabod (*no glory*), adding, "The glory has left Israel because the ark of the covenant has been taken."

God's Chest Among the Philistines

I Samuel 5

The ark is taken from the battlefield at Ebenezer to Ashdod. The Philistines place it in Dagon's temple next to Dagon. The next morning the citizens wake up and Dagon has fallen facedown before the ark. The next morning it happens again. This time Dagon's head and hands are cut off and lying on the doorstep.

When Ashdod's inhabitants see what is happening, they get rid of the ark of the covenant. They send the chest to Gath. The LORD's hand comes against the city, causing young and old alike to break out with tumors.

Gath sends the chest to Ekron, but they refuse to keep it. Nobody wants the ark of the covenant.

The Return of The Ark of The Covenant

I Samuel 6

After the LORD's chest has been among the Philistines for seven months, their leaders gather priests and diviners for consultation. They inform the leaders to send the ark back and include a guilt offering. Then the Philistines will be healed.

So, the ark is returned with five gold tumors (or hemorrhoids), and five gold mice, to match the numbers of Philistine rulers. The ark is placed on a new cart with two nursing cows. The cows follow the road to Beth-Shemesh.

When the Israelites at Beth-Shemesh see the ark coming down the path, seventy of them investigate the chest out of curiosity. God strikes down all seventy. The residents in Beth-Shemesh send messengers to the Israelites in Kiriath-jearim. They say, "The Philistines have returned the LORD's chest! Now come down here and take it with you."

The people of Keriath-jearim take the LORD's chest. They bring it to Abinadab's house, which sets on a hill. The people in the city dedicate Eleazar, Abinadab's son, to care for the ark of the covenant.

Samuel Leads Israel

I Samuel 7

Now 20 years have passed since the ark had been returned to Israel and kept at Kiriath-jearim. Samuel tells the people of Israel, "Get rid of the foreign gods and the Ashtoreths among you. Worship only the LORD. Then he will rescue you from the hand of the Philistines." Israel does what Samuel asks of them.

Then Samuel asks the people to gather at Mizpah for a time of prayer. When they gather, they draw water and pour it on the LORD's presence. They fast and confess. And Samuel judges the Israelites at Mizpah.

The Philistines hear of this and march toward Mizpah. The Israelites are afraid of the Philistines. Samuel takes a young lamb and offers it as a burnt offering to the LORD. The LORD thunders loudly against the Philistines and causes them to flee before Israel. The Israelites charge after them, striking them down all the way to Beth-car.

Samuel takes a stone and sets it upright between Mizpah and Shen. He names it Ebenezer (*help stone*), explaining, "The LORD has helped us to this point." The LORD's hand remains against the Philistines all of

Summary of I Samuel

Samuel's life. The cities of Ekron and Gath are rescued from Philistine control. There is also peace between Israel and the Amorites.

Samuel judges Israel throughout his life. He annually makes his rounds to Bethel, Gilgal and Mizpah to judge disputes. His home is in Ramah, where he builds an altar to the LORD.

Israel Wants a King

I Samuel 8

As Samuel grows older, he appoints his sons as judges in Israel. The firstborn is Joel (*Yahweh is God*) and the second is Abijah (*Yahweh is my father*). They both judge from Beer-sheba. Like the two sons of Eli, the two sons of Samuel do not walk in the ways of their father. They take dishonest gain and bribes, and pervert justice.

The elders of Israel go to see Samuel at Ramah. They tell Samuel they are unhappy with his sons. They want Samuel to appoint a king so they can be like the other nations. Samuel considers such a demand sinful. However, he prays to the LORD about it. The LORD says, "They have not rejected you; they have rejected me as their king. Listen to them but warn them about the implications of having a king.

Samuel tells the elders, "This is what a king has the power to do. He will take your sons and send them to war. He will take your daughters and your fields and flock and keep them for himself. He will tax you until you yourselves become his servants. When that day comes, the LORD will not listen when you complain about getting what you wanted."

The people refuse to listen to Samuel. Samuel prays to the LORD about it. The LORD says, "Appoint them a king."

The Unfolding of a Royal Plan

I Samuel 9

There is an influential man of the Benjamin tribe named Kish. He has a son named Saul. There is no one more impressive in Israel. Saul is a head taller than anyone else.

One day the donkeys of Saul's father wander off. Kish tells his son Saul to go look for the donkeys. Saul and his attendant travel through the country of Ephraim and on to the region of Shalishah (*near Gilgal?*). They travel on to Shaalim (*nine miles from Gibeah?*) and through the Benjamite region but still do not find the donkeys.

When they get to Zuph, Saul determines that it is time to start thinking about their own welfare rather than the donkeys. The attendant tells Saul that there is a man of God in the nearby city who might be able to help them. Saul agrees with the idea. They will use a piece of silver to pay the man.

They approach the city and inquire where this "man of God" can be found. Some women say, "He is just ahead. Go quickly and catch him before he leaves." As Saul and his attendant enter the city, they see Samuel coming toward them on his way to the high place. (The LORD had informed Samuel the day before that He was sending a Benjamite his way the next day. The LORD told Samuel to anoint him over Israel.)

When Samuel sees Saul entering the city, the LORD says, "Here is the man I told you about; he will rule My people." When Saul approaches Samuel at the gate and asks for directions to the seer's house.

Summary of I Samuel

Samuel answers, "I am the seer! Come with me to the high place and eat with me today. Before you leave tomorrow, I will tell you what is in your heart. You have been looking for donkeys, but they have already been found. Now Israel is looking for you."

Saul responds, "I am a Benjaminite from the smallest tribe and my clan is the least important clan of the smallest tribe. Why are you saying this to me?"

Samuel takes Saul and his attendant to the banquet hall and places them at the head of the table. Samuel has the cook bring out a special portion of meat for Saul. After the meal, Saul takes them back to the city, where they continue to speak from his home.

Saul and the attendant get up early the next morning. Samuel sees them off. As they get near the edge of the city, Samuel says to Saul, "Tell the attendant to go on ahead. I want you to stay for a while and I will reveal the word of God to you." So, the attendant goes on ahead.

The First King Is Crowned

I Samuel 10

Samuel takes a flask of oil, pours it out on Saul's head, kisses him, and says, "This will be a sign to you. When you leave you will find two men at Rachel's Grave at Zelzah (*near Bethlehem?*) in the Benjamin territory. They will tell you that your father is worried about you. You will proceed from there to the oak of Tabor. Three men will be going up to God at Bethel with three goats, three loaves of bread, and a skin of wine. They will give you two loaves of bread. After that you will come to the hill of God (Gibeath-elohim) where there are Philistine garrisons. When you arrive at the city, you will meet prophets coming down from the high place. The spirit of the LORD will control you. You will prophesy with them and be transformed into a different person. After all these signs, from then on God is with you. Go ahead to Gilgal. I will come meet you there to offer burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. Wait seven days until I come and show you what to do."

When Saul leaves Samuel, God changes Saul's heart. Everything Samuel said would happen does so. When Saul arrives at Gibeah, a group of prophets meet him, and he prophesies with them.

Israel Receives Saul as King

I Samuel 10

Samuel summons the people to the LORD at Mizpah. He says, "Today you have rejected your God, the one who saves you from your troubles. All because you want a king. Now present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes and clans."

All the tribes come forward. Benjamin is selected. Then the clans of Benjamin come forward. The Matrite clan is selected. Finally, Saul is selected. But Saul does not show up. They inquire of the LORD, "Where is Saul?" The LORD replies, "There he is, hidden among the supplies."

The people run and get Saul. When he stands, he is a head taller than anyone else. And all the people shout, "Long live the king!" Then Samuel proclaims the rights of kingship to the people, which he had written on a scroll. He sends everyone home. Saul also goes to his home in Gibeah. Many Brave men follow him. But some wicked men despise him.

Saul Delivers Jabesh-Gilead from The Ammonites

I Samuel 11

About a month later, Nahash the Ammonite lays siege to the town of Jabesh-Gilead. The men of Jabesh ask Nahash to make a peace treaty with them and they will serve him. Nahash refuses unless he is allowed to gouge everyone's right eye out to humiliate all Israel. The leaders of Jabesh stall the negotiations until they can seek help. When the messengers come to Saul's hometown of Gibeah, they read the terms of Nahash's treaty. When Saul hears these words, the Spirit of God takes control of him. He takes a team of oxen, cut them into pieces, and has messengers send them throughout the land of Israel to get their attention.

As a result, the people of Israel are united against the Ammonites. There are 300,000 Israelites and another 30,000 from Judah. Saul instructs the messengers to go back to Jabesh and let Nahash think that no one will help. They tell Nahash that the citizens of Jabesh will come out tomorrow to accept the consequences of the treaty.

The next day, Saul organizes the troop into three divisions. The Israelites invade the Ammonite camp and secure a massive victory.

Saul's Confirmation as King

I Samuel 11

After the victory over the Ammonites, some in Israel want to bring in those who were opposed to Saul and execute them. But Saul forbids it, saying, "The LORD has provided deliverance in Israel."

Then Samuel says, "Let us go to Gilgal, so we can renew the kingship of Saul." The Israelites make it official in Gilgal in the presence of the LORD that Saul is king. Saul and everyone rejoice.

Samuel's Final Public Address

I Samuel 12

Samuel says to Israel, *"I listened to you and placed a king over you. I have led you from my youth. Now I am old. Let me remind you about all the righteous acts the LORD has done for you and your ancestors."*

"When Jacob went to Egypt, God sent them Moses and Aaron to lead them out of slavery and settle in this place. When they forgot God, He handed them over to Hazor, to the Philistines, and to Moab. When they repented of the worship of other gods, the LORD sent them Jerubbaal, Barak, Jephthah, and Samuel. He rescued you."

"But when you saw that Nahash was coming against you, you said to me, 'We must have a king' – even though the LORD is your king. Now here is the king you have chosen. If you fear and obey the LORD, then both you and your king will follow your God. So, look closely and see what the LORD will do now. He will send thunder and rain to point out what a great evil you committed by requesting a king for yourselves."

Samuel calls on the LORD that very day, and the LORD sends thunder and rain. The people fear both the LORD and Samuel. Samuel says, "Even though you committed this evil, worship the LORD with all your heart. The LORD will not abandon His people. As for me, I vow that I will not sin against the LORD and will continue to pray for you. However, if you continue to do what is evil, both you and your king will be swept away."

Samuel Rebukes Saul

I Samuel 13

Saul becomes king when he is thirty years old and begins his forty-two-year reign (Acts 13:21 says 40).

There is conflict again with the Philistines. Saul chooses three thousand men and sends the rest back home. Jonathan, who was with him in the fight at Gibeah, attacks the Philistine outpost at Geba. The Philistines hear of this and prepare to retaliate. Saul summons the Israelites, and they gather at Gilgal.

The Philistines assemble a large army of charioteers and soldiers at Mikmash. When Israel hears of the size of the Philistine army, they are afraid. Some hide in caves, and others cross the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. Saul remains at Gilgal, waiting for Samuel as Samuel had directed earlier. After Saul waits for seven days with no sign of Samuel, Saul takes matters into his own hands. He offers fellowship and burnt offerings to the Lord. No sooner has he finished with the offerings when Samuel arrives.

Samuel rebukes Saul for attempting the priestly offerings himself. He says to Samuel, "Now your kingdom will not endure, because you have not kept the command the LORD gave you." Then Samuel leaves Gilgal and goes to Gibeah with an army of six hundred.

The Philistines send three raiding parties: one to Ophrah, another to Beth Horon, a third to the border near the Valley of Zeboyim. The Israelites are ill-equipped for battle during this period. A blacksmith could not be found in Israel, so the people had to go to the land of the Philistines to sharpen their tools and weapons. The Philistine blacksmiths charge the Israelites a very high price, so very few of the men who came to fight had a weapon. In fact, only Saul and Jonathan had swords. Meanwhile a garrison of the Philistines goes out to the pass of Michmash.

Jonathan Surprises The Philistines

I Samuel 14

One day at the Israelite camp Jonathan (*son of Saul*) secretly says to his assistant, "Let's go over to the Philistine garrison on the other side." The two of them cross over the rocky crag. Jonathan says to his assistant, "Let's confront the Philistines. If the LORD is willing, he can use us to save Israel. If the Philistine garrison tells us to wait where we are, then we will abandon our plan. But if they say, 'Come up to us', then we will know the LORD is giving them to us."

Jonathan and his assistant show themselves to the Philistines. The Philistines tell them to come on over. The two attack the Philistines and kill about twenty men. The Philistine garrison panics and the earth shakes. This gets the attention of Saul's camp. Saul sends out his six hundred men to join the battle. Even those who had been in hiding or run away come and join in the battle. The LORD gives Israel a great victory this day.

Saul's Uninspired Oath

Saul places an unnecessary oath on his troops that day. He says, "Cursed by anyone who eats food before evening before I have avenged my enemies." Before evening the troops come upon a honeycomb. The men want to taste it but remember the oath. However, Jonathan has not heard of the curse his father would place on anyone who ate. He does eat the honey and encourages the soldiers to do the same. Instead, they fulfill the oath to their king and do not eat.

Summary of I Samuel

After they successfully finish fighting for the day the troops are very faint. They take the spoils of war and slaughter the sheep and oxen. The hungry men eat the meat with the blood still present. When Saul finds out about it, he orders the soldiers around him to prepare a makeshift altar and round up the troops. They bring oxen and sheep, slaughter them, and the soldiers eat meat without blood. This was the first altar that Saul built to the LORD.

Jonathan Placed in Jeopardy

I Samuel 14

Saul hopes to finish off the Philistines the next day. The priests say, "Let us consult God." Saul inquires of God but does not receive an answer. Saul gathers the people to find out who has sinned to keep God from answering. Saul says, "Whoever is responsible shall die, even if it is me or my son Jonathan." The people stand on one side; Saul and Jonathan stand on the other. Urim and Thummim are cast. The cast clears the people. That leaves Saul and Jonathan. Urim and Thummim are cast again. This time it clears Saul. Saul asks Jonathan to account for himself.

Jonathan confesses, "I tasted honey during the battle. Here I am. I will die." Saul says, "You shall die!" The people push back against Saul, "Why should the one who gave us this great victory die? God was with him then, and we stand behind Jonathan now." So, the people ransomed Jonathan from death. Saul withdraws from pursuing the Philistines, and the Philistines go back to their homeland. During his reign Saul goes on to fight the Moabites, the Ammonites, the Edomites, the Philistines, and the Amalekites.

Saul's Family and Inner Circle

I Samuel 14

Saul's wife at the time is Ahinoam. His sons of Saul are Jonathan, Ishvi, and Malchishua. Saul's daughters are Merab and Michal. The commander of his army is his uncle Abner, son of Ner. Kish is the father of Saul. When Saul sees any strong and valiant warrior, he takes him into his service and inner circle.

Saul Defeats the Amalekites

I Samuel 15

Samuel says to Saul, "Listen to the words of the LORD. 'I will punish the Amalekites for opposing the Israelites when they were rescued from Egypt. Attack them and destroy all that they have; do not spare any of them, whether man; woman, child, infant, or animal.'"

Saul gathers two hundred-thousand-foot soldiers and ten thousand soldiers of Judah. When Saul gets near the city of the Amalekites, he says to the Kenites, "Withdraw from among the Amalekites or you will be destroyed." The Kenites leave. Then Saul defeats the Amalekites from Havilah as far as Shur. He keeps King Agag alive, as well as some of the best sheep and other animals.

Saul Crosses The Line with God

I Samuel 15

The word of the LORD comes to Samuel: "I regret that I made Saul King, for he has not followed me or carried out my commands." Samuel is angry. He rises early the next day to meet Saul. He learns that Saul is at Carmel, where he is setting up a monument for himself. At Carmel Samuel confronts the king about his lack of obedience. Saul tries to explain his actions, but Samuel does not buy it.

Saul says to Samuel, "I have sinned. I pray that you will pardon my sin and return with me, so that I may worship the LORD." Samuel says, "I will not return with you, for the LORD has rejected you from being

Summary of I Samuel

king over Israel. In fact, the LORD has torn this kingdom of Israel away from you this very day and has given it to a neighbor of yours who is better than you.” Then Saul cries out, “I have sinned. Yet honor me now and return with me, so that I may worship the LORD your God.” At this point Samuel returns with Saul and together they worship the LORD. Saul hopes the LORD’s anger with him has subsided.

After worshipping together, Samuel says, “Bring Agag the king of the Amalekites to me.” And Samuel cuts Agag into pieces before the LORD in Gilgal. Then Samuel goes to Ramah and Saul returns to his house in Gibeah. Samuel will not see Saul again until the day of his death, yet he does grieve over Saul. The LORD is sorry that he made Saul king over Israel.

David Secretly Anointed as King

I Samuel 16

The LORD says to Samuel, “How long will you grieve over Saul? I reject him. Fill your horn with oil and set out. I am sending you to Jesse the Bethlehemite. One of his sons will become king. Take a heifer and say to Jesse, ‘I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.’” Samuel goes to Bethlehem. Jesse asks, “Do you come peacefully? Samuel replies, “I come in peace to sacrifice to the LORD.” Samuel sanctifies Jesse and his sons and invites them to the ritual of sacrifice. This allows Samuel to observe each of David’s sons.

As the sons are brought before Samuel, Samuel lets the LORD evaluate each one. Jesse had seven of his sons pass before Samuel. Samuel says to Jesse, “The LORD has not chosen any of these. Are all your sons here?” Jesse says, “There remains the youngest, but he is tending the sheep.” Jesse now brings David before Samuel. The LORD says to Samuel, “Rise and anoint him, for this is the one.” Then the spirit of the LORD comes mightily upon David from that day forward.

David Plays the Lyre for Saul

I Samuel 16

The spirit of the LORD departs from Saul. An evil spirit from the LORD begins to torment him. So, Saul says to the servants, “Provide me someone who can play music well.” One of his servants notes that a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite has a son who plays the lyre well. Saul sends messengers to Jesse to bring David to Saul. Jesse takes a donkey loaded with bread, a skin of wine, and a kid goat with David to the home of Saul. Saul loves him. Whenever the evil spirit from God comes upon Saul, David takes the lyre and plays it. Then the evil spirit departs from him for a time.

David And Goliath

I Samuel 17

The Philistines gather for battle between Socoh and Azekah in Judah. Saul and the Israelites are camped in the valley of Elah. The Philistines stand on the mountain on one side of the valley and Israel stands on the mountain on the other side of the valley. The champion of the Philistines is Goliath of Gath. He is very tall (*between 6’9” and 9’5”*). He wears heavy armor and is armed with a javelin and spear. Goliath taunts the Israelites to send someone out to fight him instead of having the two entire armies fight each other. When Saul and his army hear these words, they are afraid.

Now David is the youngest of eight sons of Jesse of Bethlehem. Three of Jesse’s sons have gone with Saul to battle the Philistines. For forty days the Philistine has come forward to taunt the Israelites.

Jesse says to David, “Take food to your brothers who are with Saul and check up on them.” So, David leaves early in the morning and finds the camp of his brothers. Goliath is out in front of the Philistines once again taunting Saul’s men.

Summary of I Samuel

David says to those nearby; “Who is this man to defy the armies of the living God? And what shall be done for the man who kills this giant?” The men respond, “The king will give him his daughter in marriage and make all his family free in Israel.”

When David’s brother Eliab hears David talking to the other men, he asks, “Why are you here? You should be back with the sheep in the wilderness? You have just come to see the battle.” David does not pay attention to Eliab but asks others around him more about the Philistine named Goliath.

Word of David’s confidence reaches Saul. The king has David come to him. Saul says to young David, “You are not able to go against this Philistine. He is a highly trained battle-tested warrior. You are just a boy.” But David says, “I am experienced at keeping my father’s sheep safe from wild animals. I have rescued a lamb from lions and bears. The God who saved me from the clutches of these animals will also save me from the hand of this Philistine.” Saul says to David, “Go, and may the LORD be with you!”

Saul equips David with his own armor and sword. He tries to get use to the heavy attire, but it is not working for him. David chooses five smooth stones from the wadi (*dry stream bed of the valley*) and places them in his bag. With his sling in his hand, David draws near to the Philistine.

Goliath draws near to David. When the giant sees David is just a young lad, Goliath says, “Am I a dog that you come to me with sticks?” Then Goliath curses David by his gods and tells him to come toward him. But David tells Goliath to come toward him, taunting, “I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied.”

When the Philistine moves toward David, David runs quickly to meet him. David puts his hand into his bag, takes out a stone, slings it, and strikes the Philistine on his forehead. The stone sinks into his head, and he falls face down on the ground. David then stands over Goliath; he grasps the sword from Goliath’s sheath and kills him with it.

The Philistines flee the battlefield when they see their champion dead. The troops of Israel and Judah rise and pursue them as far as Gath and the Gates of Ekron.

When Saul sees David stand against the Philistine, he asks Abner, the commander of the army, “Whose son is this young man?” Abner must bring David to Saul to answer for himself. David says, “I am the son of your servant Jesse the Bethlehemite.”

Jonathan’s Covenant with David

I Samuel 18

From that moment on, Saul’s son Jonathan and David become soulmates. Saul does not let David return to his father’s house. Jonathan and David make a covenant together. Jonathan gives David his robe, his armor, his sword, his bow, and his belt. David is successful wherever he goes. Saul sets him over the army. Everyone loves David.

Saul’s Jealousy of David

I Samuel 18

On the way home from battle with the Philistines, the women line up along the path singing and dancing as Saul nears. The women make it look like they are glad to see their king. But they are singing to

Summary of I Samuel

themselves, “Saul has killed his thousands and David his ten thousand.” Saul overhears the accolades to David. Saul has his eye on David from that day on.

The next day an evil spirit from God rushes upon Saul. While David is playing his lyre in the house, Saul tries to kill him twice. But David eludes him.

Saul is afraid of David because the LORD is now with David and no longer with the king. Saul puts him in charge of a thousand soldiers and sends him out to battle. David has success on the battlefield. Saul stands in awe of David. However, Saul is increasingly jealous of David. All in Israel and Judah recognize that David is the one leading the army to victory.

David Marries Michal

I Samuel 18

Saul says to David, “Here is my elder daughter Merab; I will give her to you if you will continue to fight the LORD’s battles.” But at the time when Saul’s daughter Merab should have been given to David, she was given by the king instead to Adriel the Meholathite as a wife.

Saul’s younger daughter Michal loves David. Saul is pleased with this news for it allows him to continue placing David on the battlefield and increases the odds that the Philistines will take David out of the picture altogether. Saul’s messengers tell David that the king will allow him to marry Michal. David says he cannot afford to marry a royal’s daughter. The messengers reply, “The king does not require any marriage present (fee) from him except a hundred foreskins of the Philistines that he may avenge on the king’s enemies. The plan is that David would be killed trying to meet the king’s condition to marriage. Yet David goes out and kills one hundred Philistines and brings the foreskins to prove it. Saul gives Michal to David as a wife.

It is now clear to Saul that the LORD is now with David. Saul’s son Jonathan and daughter Michal love David. And David is more successful and popular than any of his servants, The king becomes more afraid of this rising star named David every day. Saul wants David dead.

Jonathan Intercedes for David

I Samuel 19

Saul speaks with his son Jonathan and his servants about killing David. Jonathan tells David, “My father is trying to kill you. Tomorrow morning stay in a secret place and hide. I will let you know what to do next.”

Jonathan speaks to his father and reminds him that all the things he is complaining about David are things that David did to help the king and country. Saul swears to his son, “As the LORD lives, he shall not be put to death” Jonathan relays these things to David, and he is able to come out of hiding.

Michal Helps David Escape

I Samuel 19

There is war again with the Philistines. Saul sends out David to lead the fight. David launches a heavy and successful attack on the Philistines. Afterward, an evil spirit from the LORD comes upon Saul. David is playing music for Saul in his house while Saul sits with his spear in his hand. Saul seeks to spear David to the wall but misses. David flees into the night to his own home.

Summary of I Samuel

Saul sends messengers to David's house to watch him, planning to kill him in the morning. David's wife Michal tells him, "If you do not save yourself tonight, it will be too late in the morning." Michal lets David down through a window and he flees to safety. Michal takes an idol and lays it on the bed and makes it look like David is still in bed. She puts a net of goat's hair on its head and covers it with clothes. When Saul's messengers are sent to take David she says, "He is sick." Saul tells the messengers to bring David back to Saul's house so he may kill him. When the messengers come into David's room, they see the idol in his bed. Saul says to Michal, "Why have you deceived me?" Michal responds, "He said to me, 'Let me go; why should I have to kill you?'"

David Joins Samuel in Ramah

I Samuel 19

David flees to Ramah where he meets Samuel and tells him all that Saul has done to him. He and Samuel go and settle in Naioth. Someone tells Saul that David is in Naioth in Ramah. Saul sends messengers to take David. When they see the company of prophets with Samuel in a state of frenzy, the messengers also fall into a state of frenzy. When Saul hears of this, he sends other messengers who also fall into a state of frenzy. This happens a third time. Then Saul goes to Ramah. He comes to the great well that is in Secu. Saul asks, "Where are Samuel and David?" When he learns they are at Naioth, Saul heads toward Naioth. Along the way, he too falls into a prophetic frenzy. He strips off his clothes and falls before Samuel. He lays naked all that day and night. Therefore, it is said, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

The Friendship of David and Jonathan

I Samuel 20

David leaves Naioth in Ramah. He finds Jonathan and says, "What have I done? What is my guilt? Why does your father want to end my life?" Jonathan says, "He won't kill you. My father does nothing without disclosing it to me. David sees it differently. He says, "Your father knows you like me, and does not want you to know that he intends to kill me." Jonathan says to David, "I will do what you say." David says to Jonathan, "Tomorrow is a new moon. I am expected to be with the king at mealtime. But let me hide in the field until the third evening. If your father misses me, tell him that I have gone to Bethlehem for the yearly sacrifice with the family. If he is fine with that then I will be fine. If he is angry then be aware that he will do evil to me. Who will tell me if your father answers you harshly?"

Jonathan takes David into a field. Jonathan tells David that in two days he will know what his father is up to. Jonathan will shoot three arrows into this field. Then he will send a boy to collect the arrows. Jonathan says, "If I tell the boy to look for the arrows on the side of field you are on, then you safe to return to Saul's house. But if I tell the boy to look on the side that is away from you, the LORD is sending you away to be safe."

The day of the new moon comes. David does not show up to sit at the table with the king. The king notices but does not say anything. The second day the king asks Jonathan why David is missing. Jonathan tells the king a story that David is in Bethlehem for the family sacrifice. This angers the king against Jonathan. He says to his son, "You son of a rebellious woman! For as long as the son of Jesse lives, neither you nor your kingdom will be established. Now send David to me, so that I may put him to death." Saul even throws his spear at his son to show his anger.

The next morning Jonathan goes to the field where David is hiding. Jonathan shoots three arrows into the field. He tells the errand boy that the arrows are beyond where he is going. As soon as the boy had gone from the field, David comes and falls before Jonathan. He bows three times; they kiss and weep.

Summary of I Samuel

David weeps most of all. Then Jonathan says to David, “Go in peace, since both of us have sworn an oath in the name of the LORD. David leaves the area, and Jonathan goes into the city.

David Eats the Sacred Bread at Nob

I Samuel 21

David flees to Nob and meets Ahimelech the priest there. Ahimelech asks why David is alone [*not with royal security guards*]. David gives the priest a reasonable excuse and changes the subject. David says, “Give me five loaves of bread, or whatever you have to eat.” Ahimelech responds, “I have the holy bread, but only if the young men with you have kept themselves from women.” So, the priest gives David the holy bread set apart to be the Bread of the Presence in the tabernacle.

Now a servant of Saul is there that day, detained before the LORD. His name is Doeg the Edomite, the chief of Saul’s herdsmen. When David sees him in the distance David asks the priest if there is a sword he can use on the trip, implying that he just forgot to bring his on this trip. The priest tells David, “The sword of Goliath the Philistine is wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod in the tabernacle.” David says, “Great; give it to me.”

David Flees to Gath

I Samuel 21

The next day David leaves Saul’s territory and makes it to the territory of the Philistine city-king Achish. Servants of King Achish recognize David. David pretends to be a madman in their presence. When they bring David to their king, Achish asks them, “Why do you bring an insane person to my house, as if I don’t already have enough madmen to deal with?” [*David is let go.*]

David Protects His Family from Saul in Moab

I Samuel 22

David escapes to the cave (*fortress*) of Adullam. All his father’s house, including David’s brothers, travel from Judah to see him there. David becomes a commander of four hundred men in Adullam, helping those in distress while he is there.

From there, he goes into Moab territory to the city of Mizpeh. He asks the king of Moab, “Please let my father and mother stay with you, while I stay in the fortress (*cave of Adullam*) awaiting God’s will to be revealed.”

Sometime later, the prophet Gad tells David, “Leave the fortress and go to the land of Judah.” He does.

Saul Is Royally Upset with Nob

I Samuel 22

Meanwhile, Saul is sitting under the tamarisk tree on the hill at Gibeah in the territory of Benjamin. He says to his own servants and the Benjaminites, “Do you think Jesse’s son is going to take care of you and reward you for your silence? No one told me my son made a covenant with Jesse’s son. Is no one concerned about me?”

Doeg the Edomite responds, “I saw Jesse’s son go to Ahimelech the priest at Nob. Ahimelech questioned the LORD for David, then the priest gives him bread from the tabernacle as well as the sword of Goliath the Philistine.” The king sends for Ahimelech and all his extended family who are priests at Nob. Saul orders his servants to kill all the priests of Nob. They are unwilling to lift a hand to attack the LORD’s priests. So, the king orders Doeg to kill all eighty-five priests of Nob. Doeg the Edomite does as the king

Summary of I Samuel

orders. He puts the whole priestly city of Nob to the sword: men and women, children and infants, even oxen, donkeys, and sheep. That is, all but one person who escapes.

Abiathar, one of Ahimelech's sons, flees from Saul and finds David. When David learns of the massacre of the priests, he feels responsible for what Saul has done. David vows to protect Abiathar from Saul.

David On the Run

I Samuel 23

The Philistines attack Keilah and are looting the threshing floors. David is encouraged by the LORD to fight the Philistines. His soldiers are not convinced. David asks the LORD again, getting the same response. So, David and his men go to Keilah and drive the Philistines from the city.

Saul hears that David is fighting at Keilah. He says, "God has handed David over to me. He is trapped in a town with gates and bars." Saul calls up his troops for war and goes to Keilah. When David learns that Saul plans him harm, he tells Abiathar, "Bring the priestly vest." David prays, "LORD God of Israel, will Saul come down for me? "Yes, he will come down, the LORD answers. David continues his prayer, request, "Will the citizens of Keilah hand me over to Saul?" "Yes." the LORD replies.

So, David and his six hundred men leave Keilah. They keep moving from place to place. He lives in the fortresses in the wilderness and in the hills of the Ziph wilderness. Saul searches for him, but God never lets Saul find him.

Saul's son Jonathan comes to David at Horesh and encourages him. He says, "Do not be afraid! You will be king over Israel, and I will be second in command. Even my father knows this." David stays at Horesh, but Jonathan goes back home.

Ziphites come to Saul at Gibeah, reporting that David is hiding around Horesh. Saul asks them to find out exactly where he is and report back. But every time Saul is told where David is hiding, David gets word of it and escapes. One close call for David occurs in the Maon wilderness. Saul is on one side of a hill looking for David who is on the other side of the hill. Just before David is surrounded, Saul gets an urgent message that the Philistines have invaded Israel. Saul quickly leaves to pursue the Philistines. That hill was nicknamed Escape Rock from then on. David goes from there and lives at the En-gedi fortresses near the Dead Sea.

David Spares Saul's Life

I Samuel 24

After pursuing the Philistines, Saul is informed that David is in the En-gedi wilderness. Saul takes three thousand men and searches for David. When Saul gets to the sheep pens beside the road, Saul needs to use the restroom. He goes into a nearby cave to do his business. David and his men are in the very back of the cave.

David's soldiers want David to take advantage of this opportunity from God. David sneaks up behind Saul and cuts off a corner of Saul's robe. Then David feels bad that he has done this to his king. He will not let his men attack Saul. But as Saul exits the caves to return to his troops, David also goes outside and yells, "My master the king!" Saul looks back and sees David bowing low out of respect, David says to Saul, "I do not want to ruin you. I could have killed you just now. See the corner of your robe in my hand? I am not guilty of rebellion, but you are trying to kill me. May the LORD take vengeance on you for me, but I will not lift a hand against you."

Summary of I Samuel

Saul asks, “David, is that your voice?” Then Saul broke down in tears saying, “You are more righteous than I am because I have treated you terribly. Even I know that you will become king and the kingdom will flourish. Because of that, I ask you not to kill off my descendants after I am gone, and that you will not destroy my name.”

David made this solemn pledge to Saul. Saul goes back home. David goes up to the fortresses in the wilderness.

David And Abigail

I Samuel 25

Samuel dies. Israel assembles and mourns. They bury him at his home in Ramah.

David moves down into the Desert of Paran. A certain man in Maon named Nabal is very wealthy. He is in Carmel for the time of sheep-shearing with three thousand of his sheep. His wife’s name is Abigail. They are Calebites. David learns that Nabal is at Carmel and sends ten young men to greet him. David tells his young men to tell Nabal that when David was in Carmel for a season he did not mistreat Nabal’s shepherds when they came to the area.

When the young men arrive at Carmel, they give Nabal David’s message. He responds by asking, “Who is this David and why should I break bread and meat with strangers like you?”

David’s men turn around and go back. When David learns how Nabal treated his messengers, he takes 400 men to confront Nabal.

One of the servants of Nabal tells his wife Abigail how her husband mistreated the young men. Abigail acts quickly. She takes two hundred loaves of bread, several sheep, skins of wine, sixty pounds of grain, and desserts and heads out to find David. When she arrives, she gets off her donkey and bows before David. Abigail apologizes for her husband’s actions. She says, “He is just like his name (*Nabal means fool*). The LORD will make a lasting dynasty for you since you fight the LORD’s battles.”

David says to Abigail, “Praise be to the LORD who has sent you today. May you be blessed for your good judgment.” He accepts her gifts and grants her request.

When Abigail goes to Nabal he is holding a banquet for everyone and was very drunk. The next morning, she tells Nabal all the things she did to appease David. His heart fails him, and he cannot move. Ten days later the LORD strikes Nabal and he dies.

Upon hearing of Nabal’s death, David sends word to Abigail of his desire to marry her. She accepts. David had earlier married Ahinoam of Jezreel, so now they are both his wives. But Saul has now given his daughter Michal, whom he had earlier given to David in marriage, to be the wife of Paltiel, son of Laish.

David Spares Saul Life a Second Time

I Samuel 26

The Ziphites go King Saul at Gibeath, saying, “We believe David is hiding on the hill of Hakilah.” Saul then goes down to the Desert of Ziph with three thousand troops to search for David. David learns of Saul’s intentions and finds out where Saul is camped. He takes his nephew Abishai (Joab’s son) with him that night and finds Saul sleeping. Abishai wants to kill Saul with his spear, but David says no. Instead, just take Saul’s spear and water jug and let’s go. They were able to do this undetected because the LORD had put Saul and his men in a deep sleep.

Summary of I Samuel

The next morning David calls out to Saul and his men, “Where are the king’s spear and water jug?” Saul recognizes David’s voice. David implores Saul to tell him why he is so obsessed with hunting him down. Saul answers, “I have sinned. Come back, David. I will not harm you again. I have acted like a fool.”

David returns the king’s spear to Saul and goes on his way. Saul returns home.

David Among the Philistines

I Samuel 27

David begins to think that one day Saul will have him killed. He decides the best he can do is escape to the land of the Philistines. Surely Saul will eventually quit looking for him. David and his six hundred men and their families go to Gath, where Achish is the Philistine king of that area. David’s two wives, Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail of Carmel, are with him. Sure enough, when Saul learns that David is outside of Israel’s territory, he quits searching for David.

David asks the Philistine city-king Achish for one of the country towns where he and his camp could live. Achish gives him Ziklag. David lives in the land of the Philistines for sixteen months.

During this time David raids villages of the Geshurites, the Girzites, and the Amalekites. Whenever he attacks, he does not leave any human alive, but keeps animals and clothes. When King Achish asks David where he has been raiding, David tells Achish he is raiding Israel towns or other allies of the Israelites. Achish begins to trust David, thinking that David will be a good Philistine servant.

Soon the five major Philistine cities gather their forces to fight against Israel. Achish tells David that he and his men must join the fight against Israel. David accepts. Achish makes David one of his bodyguards.

Saul And the Spiritual Medium at Endor

I Samuel 28

The Israelite prophet Samuel had died a few years earlier (*in chapter 25*). Saul has expelled all the mediums and spiritists from the land of Israel. But when Saul sees the entire Philistine city-kings preparing for war, he is afraid. He inquires of the LORD, but the LORD does not answer him by way or dreams or Urim or prophets. In desperation Saul consults a medium in Endor to conjure up advice from the late prophet who anointed him king of Israel.

Saul disguises himself and journeys with two men to meet the woman who is a medium at Endor. The medium is concerned these strangers might be setting a trap to catch her in her controversial practice. Saul swears to her by the LORD’s name that she will not be punished for this. Then he asks her to bring up the spirit of the prophet Samuel. The medium is still unaware of the identity of the one hiring her.

When the medium goes into her trance and brings up the spirit of Samuel, she shouts to Saul, “You deceived me! You are Saul.” The king assures her she is safe. When the medium describes what the spirit looks like, Saul recognizes that it is truly Samuel.

Samuel asks Saul, “Why do you consult me now that the LORD has departed from you? The LORD has torn the kingdom out of your hands and given it to David. You did not obey the LORD. The LORD will deliver both Israel and you into the hands of the Philistines, and you and your sons will soon be with me.

Saul immediately falls to the ground, filled with fear. He initially refuses to eat, but at the urging of the medium and his own men he eats finally eats. Then Saul and his men leave Endor.

King Achish Send David Back to Ziklag

I Samuel 29

The Philistines are gathered at Aphek and Israel is gathered in Jezreel. David and his Hebrew men are marching at the rear of the Philistine army with King Achish. The other Philistine commanders ask, "What about these Hebrews among us?" King Achish speaks in defense of David, but the commanders insist that David and his men cannot fight against the Israelites and still be trusted. David and his men get up early the next morning and go back to Ziklag, their home in land of the Philistines.

David Destroys the Amalekites

I Samuel 30

On the third day David and his men reach Ziklag only to find that the Amalekites have raided the area. The city is burned down. The women and children are captured. David and his men weep loudly for their wives and families. Some are angry with David for bringing them to this land in the first place. David is only able to find strength in the LORD.

David says to Abiathar the priest, "Bring me the ephod." David inquires of the LORD whether to pursue the Amalekite raiding party. The LORD assures David that he should go after them and that he will be able to rescue the wives and children. David and his six hundred men go the Besor Valley and take a break. Two hundred of David's men stay there, simply too tired to continue. They will guard the camp and supplies. The other four hundred continue in pursuit.

A weary Egyptian is found in a field and brought to David. He is given food and water. The man says he is a slave of one of the Amalekites who raided Ziklag. The Egyptian takes them to the place where the Amalekites are camped. The Amalekites are celebrating their successful raid. David fights them for a full day. All the Amalekites are killed except for four hundred who escape. All the Ziklag hostages are rescued, including David's two wives. The livestock is taken as part of the plunder.

David and his men return to the Besor Valley where the two hundred had stayed behind. Some of the men who fought in the fierce rescue mission are adamant that the ones who stayed behind should not receive any of the plunder. David replies, "No, you must not do that with what the LORD has given us. The share for those who stayed behind with the supplies is the same as that of those who fought the battle." David made this a rule for Israel from that day to this.

When David reaches Ziklag, he sends some of the plunder to the elders of Judah, who are his friends.

The Death of King Saul

I Samuel 31

(Meanwhile, back in Israel) The Philistines follow through with their major attack on Israel's troops. The Israelites flee, and many die on Mount Gilboa. The Philistines pursue Saul and his son. They kill his sons Jonathan, Abinadab, and Malki-Shua. The Philistine archers wound Saul critically.

The injured Saul says to his armor-bearer, "Draw your sword and kill me before these uncircumcised Philistines do." The armor-bearer is too afraid to do this to the king. Saul falls on his own sword. The armor-bearer then takes his own life.

Summary of I Samuel

When the Israelites along the valley and along the Jordan see that the Israelites have lost the battle, they abandon their villages. The Philistines come and occupy them.

The next day the Philistines find the body of Saul and his sons on Mount Gilboa. They cut off the king's head and send word for the Philistines to proclaim the good news in the temples of their idols and among the people. They carry Saul's body to Beth Shan and fasten his body to the wall of the city for all to see.

When the people of the city of Jabesh Gilead hear what the Philistines have done to Saul, their men march all night to Beth Shan. They take down the bodies of Saul and his sons and bring them to Jabesh. First the bodies are burned. Then they take the bones and bury them under a tamarisk tree at Jabesh. The people of Israel fast for seven days.

Summary of II Samuel

The Rise and Reign of a King's Heart

David Learns of Saul's Death

II Samuel 1

David is unaware of Saul's defeat and death at Mount Gilboa. Returning from his victory against the Amalekites, David spends two days in Ziklag. On the third day a man from Saul's camp comes to tell David the news of Saul and his son Jonathan. David asks how the man knows of Saul's death. The man says, "I happened to be on Mount Gilboa. I saw Saul leaning on his spear, with the enemy's chariots coming toward him. When Saul saw me, he asked me who I am. I told him I am an Amalekite. Then Saul asked me to finish him off before the Philistine chariots arrive and find him. I did as the king asked. Then I picked up the crown and arm band of the king and I brought them here to you, my lord."

David and his men weep and tear off their clothes. They mourn until evening for Saul, and Jonathon, and for the whole nation of Israel. Then David has one of his men strike the Amalekite down as punishment for assisting in the killing the LORD's anointed. (*Ironically, the Amalekite made up his role in death of Saul!*)

David's Song of Lament for Saul and Jonathan

II Sam. 1

David creates a poem to honor Saul and Jonathan and orders the people of Judah to be taught this lament. It can be found in the Book of Jashar (*considered a lost book now*).

"Saul and Jonathan ---

In life they were loved and admired, and in death they were not parted.

Daughters of Israel, weep for Saul.

Jonathan lies slain. I grieve for you, Jonathan, my brother.

Your love for me was wonderful, more wonderful than that of women.

How the mighty has fallen! The weapons of war have perished!"

Tribe Of Judah Anoints David as Their King

II Sam. 2

In the course of time, David asks the LORD, "Shall I go up to the tribal land of Judah?" The LORD answers, "Yes, go to Hebron." David takes his two wives, Ahinoam (*pleasant one*) and Abigail (*my father's joy*), to settle in Hebron. The men of Judah come to Hebron and anoint David as king over their tribe.

David learns that the men of Jabesh Gilead (*of the Benjamin tribe*) are the brave men who properly buried Saul. He thanks them for their kindness. He also tells them that the people of Judah have anointed him king of Judah.

Followers Of David Versus Followers of Ish-Bosheth (aka Ish-Baal)

II Sam. 2

Abner, the commander of Saul's army, brings Saul's son, Ish-Bosheth, to Mahanaim. Ish-Bosheth is now the new king over the remaining eleven tribes of Israel. Saul's son is 40 years old at the time. He reigns in Mahanaim over Israel for two years. David reigns in Hebron over Judah for seven years.

These years of 'competing kings' between Israel and Judah take a heavy toll. Abner and Ish-Bosheth's men go to Gibeon and meet with Joab and David's men at the pool of Gibeon. Abner suggests to Joab

that twelve young men from each side fight hand to hand in front the others. Both Abner and Joab agree. The twenty-four men square off in combat. David's young men grab the opponent by the head and thrust a dagger into their side. The place in Gibeon is now called Helkath Hazzurim (*Field of Daggers*). The contest does not settle the conflict over the crown. It is just the beginning of the battle.

The battle that ensues afterward is fierce. Abner and the Israelites are defeated by David's men. Abner escapes. Joab's brother, Asahel, continues to chase Abner long after the Israelites retreat. When Asahel gets close to Abner, Abner encourages Asahel to quit chasing him and go back home. Asahel refuses. Soon after, Abner surprises Asahel and thrusts his spear through him.

When Joab realizes his brother Asahel has been killed by Abner, he and his men chase after Abner. By this time, the sun is setting on the hill of Ammah on the way to the wasteland of Gibeon. The nearby men of Benjamin come and rally behind Abner. They stand on top of the hill. David's men stand below.

Abner calls out to Joab, "This is going to end badly for everyone. How long before you order your men to quit pursuing the other eleven tribes of Israel?" Exhausted and frustrated, Joab blows the trumpet for the troops of Judah to come to a halt. They no longer pursue or fight anymore that day. Abner and his men march through the night to return to Israel's capital, Mahanaim.

The men of Judah lose nineteen men in that battle. The Israelites lose three hundred and sixty Benjamites. Joab buries his brother Asahel's body in his father's tomb in Bethlehem. Then Joab and his men march all night and arrive back at Hebron, Judah's capital, by daybreak.

David's Sons Born in Hebron

II Sam. 3

The war between the house of Saul and house of David lasts a long time. The house of David is getting stronger, while the house of Saul is getting weaker. These are David's sons born in Hebron:

- Amnon, son of Ahinoam;
- Kileab, son of Abigail;
- Absalom, son of Maakah (daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur);
- Adonijah, son of Haggith;
- Shephatiah, son a Abital;
- Ithream, son of David's wife Eglah.

Abner Switches to David's Side

II Sam. 3

Abner has been strengthening his position in the house of Saul with his loyalty to the new king Ish-Bosheth. Unfortunately, Ish-Bosheth becomes suspicious of Abner's loyalty. There was a former concubine of Saul named Rizpah. One day Ish-Bosheth says to Abner, "Why did you sleep with my father's concubine?" This accusation angers Abner. He tells Ish-Bosheth that he has a good mind to do for David what the LORD promised to David and transfer the kingdom from the family of Saul to David. Ish-Bosheth does not say another word out of fear of Abner, commander of the king's army.

Feeling betrayed, Abner sends messengers to David, saying, "Make an agreement with me and I will help you bring all Israel to you." David responds, saying, "I will, but wait and bring Michal daughter of Saul when you come to meet with me." King David then sends messengers to King Ish-Bosheth demanding,

“Give me Michal whom I betrothed years ago for the price of a hundred Philistine foreskins to Saul.” Ish-Bosheth gives order for Michal to be taken away from her current husband to reunite with David.

Abner confers with the elders of Israel and specifically with leaders of the Benjamites about fulfilling the promise the LORD made to David to be the king of all Israel. Twenty men go with Abner to meet David at Hebron. Abner says to David, “Let me go and assemble the leaders of the eleven tribes of Israel for my lord and king, that they may make a covenant with you.” David sends Abner away in peace.

Joab Murders Abner

II Sam. 3

At that moment David’s men and Joab return from a raid, bringing a lot of plunder. When Joab learns that Abner, the commander of Israel’s men, has come to David and David let him Abner go in peace, Joab is angry. Joab believes that Abner is being deceptive and is actually working for Ish-Bosheth.

Joab sends messengers to race and catch up with Abner. Without David’s knowledge, Abner is brought back to Hebron. Joab takes Abner to an inner room and privately avenges the blood of his brother Asahel by stabbing Abner in the stomach.

When David hears about this, David curses Joab, saying “May Abner’s blood fall on the head of Joab and his family. May there always be someone in his family who has leprosy or leans on a crutch, or who falls by the sword or who lacks food.”

David says to Joab and all the people, “Tear your clothes in mourning and walk in front of Abner’s body.” They bury Abner in Hebron. The king sings this lament for Abner:

“Should Abner have died as the lawless do?
Your hands were not bound, your feet were not fettered.
You fell as one falls before the wicked.”

Baanah & Rekab Murder Their king Ish-Bosheth

II Sam. 4

When Ish-Bosheth learns that Abner has died in Hebron, the capital of King David, he loses courage. Without his army commander, Ish-Bosheth is vulnerable. Sure enough, two of Ish-Bosheth’s men, Rekab and Baanah, learn of Abner’s death when they get back from leading raiding bands. They travel to the home of Ish-Bosheth and stab him in the stomach, on his own bed. The two men slip away.

When others come into the house, they find Ish-Bosheth lying on his bed with his head cut off. It turns out Rekab and Baanah took the head with them and travel all the way to Hebron. They say to King David, “Here is the head of your enemy, who tried to kill you. This day the LORD has avenged you against Saul and his offspring.”

David says to them, “When wicked men kill an innocent man in his own house and on his own bed, I demand that the earth be rid of you!” So, David has them killed. He hangs their bodies by the pool in Hebron. But the head of Ish-Bosheth is taken and buried in Abner’s tomb at Hebron.

David Becomes King Over Israel

II Sam. 5

The tribes of Israel come to Hebron and say to David, “The LORD said to you years ago, ‘You will rule over Israel.’ Let it now be so.” So, they make a covenant and anoint David as king. David is thirty years old

when he becomes king, and rules for forty years (seven years, six months over Judah, thirty-three years over all Israel).

David Conquers Jerusalem

II Sam. 5

The new king and his men go to Jerusalem and battle the Jebusites. David captures the stronghold of Zion and calls it the city of David. David becomes greater and greater, for the LORD God of hosts is with him.

Hiram, king of Tyre, sends messengers to David with cedar trees, carpenters, and stonemasons. They build a house for David.

David takes more wives and concubines from Jerusalem, (*in addition to those he has already from Hebron*). In the years to come, these will conceive the following sons and daughters for David: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, **Solomon**, Ibhar, Elishua, Nepheg, Japhia, Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphelet.

David Defeats the Philistines

II Sam. 5

The Philistines go up to test the resolve of the new king of Israel. David hears of their plans and goes to his stronghold. The Philistines spread out and camp in the valley of Rephaim. David inquires of the LORD to see if he should battle the Philistines. The LORD says to David he will deliver the Philistines into his hand. So, David comes to Baal-perazim and defeats them there. The Philistines leave their idols, so David and his men carry the idols away.

The Philistines come again and camp out in the valley of Rephaim. David inquires of the LORD again. The LORD says, "Circle around behind them and come at them in front of the balsam trees." David does so and strikes down the Philistines from Geba as far as Gezer.

David Brings the Ark of The Covenant to Jerusalem

II Sam. 6

Thirty thousand men go with David to Baale-Judah to bring up the ark of God, which is called by the Name, the very name of the LORD of hosts who is enthroned above the cherubim. Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, are leading the cart. David and all the people are celebrating with musical instruments along the way.

But when they come to the threshing floor of Nacron, Uzzah reaches out to catch the ark as the oxen nearly topple it over. The anger of the LORD strikes Uzzah down for his irreverence. David becomes angry at God for taking Uzzah's life. The place is called Perez-Uzzah to this day.

The ark remains in the house of Obed-edom the Gittlite for three months. The Lord blesses his household.

David now brings the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom up to the city of David. When the bearers of the ark had gone six paces, David sacrifices an ox and a fatling. David dances before the LORD with all his might, wearing only a linen ephod. When Michal the daughter of Saul, *one of David's wives*, looks out and sees David leaping and dancing before the LORD, she despises him in her heart.

When David finishes the offerings and the celebration, he blesses the people in the name of the LORD of hosts. He distributes a cake of bread and dates and raisins to each house. But when David returns to his

own house, Michal rebukes David for uncovering himself in the eyes of his servants. David defends himself saying, "It was before the LORD that I danced!"

Michal the daughter of Saul will not bear any children in her lifetime.

David Wants to Build a Temple

II Sam. 7

During the period when the LORD has given rest from all the king's enemies, David says to Nathan the prophet, "I have a very nice dwelling, but the ark of God dwells within tent curtains." At first, Nathan advises, "Do as you desire, for the LORD is with you." But that night the word of the LORD visits Nathan, saying, "Tell David that he is not the one who should build Me a house to dwell in. I have lived in a tent since the Hebrews left Egypt until this day. I have never asked at any time, 'Why have you not built Me a house of cedar?' I have been with you (David) from the beginning. I will make your name great. I will make a house (dynasty) for you. When your days are complete, I will raise up your descendant and establish a kingdom. He will build a house for My name, and I will establish his kingdom forever."

David Responds to The Promise of The LORD

II Sam. 7

Nathan goes to David the next day and shares the LORD's words with him.

The king goes before the LORD and says, "Who am I and what is my house, that You have brought me this far? You are great; for there is none like You, and there is no God besides You. Now therefore, the word you have spoken, confirm it forever."

David no longer attempts to be the one to build the temple.

David's Victories

II Sam. 8

After this, David defeats the Philistines and subdues them. He takes control of their chief city.

He also defeats Moab. He measures two lines of survivors: one to put to death, and one line to keep alive as servants. They can remain in Moab and bring tribute annually to King David.

David defeats Hadadezer, the son of the King of Zobah. David captures 1,700 riders and 20,000 foot-soldiers. When the Arameans of Damascus come to help Hadadezer, David kills 22,000 Arameans. The LORD helps David wherever he goes.

Now when Toi, King of Hamath, hears of Hadadezer's defeat, he sends his son Joram to King David to greet and bless him for his victory. Joram also brings silver, gold, and bronze. King David dedicates these gifts to the LORD, along with gifts from other nations he subdues.

David makes quite a name for himself when he returns from killing 18,000 Arameans in the Valley of Salt.

David's Officials and Priests

II Sam. 8

David reigns over all Israel, administering justice and righteousness for all his people. Joab is over the army. Jehoshaphat is the recorder. Zadok and Ahimelech are the priests, and Seraiah is the secretary. Benaiah is over the Cherethites and the Pelethites; and David's sons are the chief ministers.

David's Kindness to Jonathan's Son

II Sam. 9

One day David asks, “Is there anyone left of the house of Saul, that I may show kindness for Jonathan’s sake? There was a servant of the house of Saul named Ziba. He is brought to David and says that there is still a son of Jonathan who is crippled in both feet. His name is Mephibosheth. David has Mephibosheth brought to him. David tells Jonathan’s son, “Do not fear, for I will show kindness to you for the sake of your father. I will restore to you all the land of your grandfather Saul; and you shall eat at my table regularly.

The king calls Saul’s servant Ziba back in and says, “All that belonged to Saul I have given back to Mephibosheth. You and your family shall cultivate the land for him. As for Mephibosheth, he shall eat at my table regularly.

David Defeats the Ammonites

II Sam. 10

After the king of the Ammonites dies, his son Hanun takes his place. David says, “I will show kindness to Hanun, just as his father showed kindness to me. Servants are sent to Hanun. When they arrive in the land of Ammon they are met with suspicion. Hanun takes David’s servants, shaves off one side of their beards, strips them of their upper clothing, and sends them away. When they tell this to David, he tells them to stay at Jericho until their beards return while he plans a response.

The Ammonites hire 20,000 Arameans from Beth-rehob and Zobah, along with 1,000 men from Maacah and 12,000 from Tob. When David hears of this, David sends Joab and his mighty men to do battle.

When Joab sees the battle is set against him in the front and the rear, he selects his choice men and array them against the Arameans. Then he sets the remainder in the hands of Abishai and arrays them against the sons of Ammon. If one is doing better than the other, they will each come to the support of the other.

It turns out that when Joab goes against the Arameans, his men overpower them, and they retreat to the city. When the Ammonites see the Arameans retreat, they flee back to their city as well. Joab returns to Jerusalem.

Back in their own city, the Arameans regroup. When David hears the Arameans are gathering at Helam, he gathers his men and cross the Jordan to meet them in battle. Again, the Arameans are defeated. Over 700 charioteers and 40,000 riders are struck down. The Arameans make peace with Israel and refuse to help the Ammonites anymore.

David Sins – A Matter of Wife and Death for Uriah the Hittite

II Sam. 11

It is springtime, when kings go out to battle. David sends Joab and his fighting men to destroy the Ammonites and besiege Rabbah. Uncharacteristically, David stays behind in the comfort of his home.

One evening David rises from his bed and walks around on the roof of his palace. He sees a beautiful woman bathing. David learns that she is Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite. David sends messengers who invite her to the palace. They lay together. Afterward, she purifies herself from her uncleanness and returns to her house. The woman conceives; she informs David that she is pregnant.

David has his army commander Joab send Bathsheba’s husband Uriah home from battle. David meets with Uriah and encourages him to enjoy rest and relaxation at home with his wife. Instead, Uriah sleeps

at the door of the king's house and never goes home. When David asks why, Uriah says, "God resides in a tent, and Israel's fighting men are camped out in an open field. I am showing respect for their sacrifice."

David says to Uriah, "Stay here a couple of days and then you can return to camp. "Then David has him over for a big meal and gets Uriah drunk. Yet Uriah still does not go home to be with Bathsheba.

In desperation, David writes a letter to Joab and has Uriah hand deliver the sealed message to the military commander. The note says, "Place Uriah in the front lines of the fiercest fighting and withdraw from him, so that he may die in battle." Joab does as King David asked, and Uriah dies in battle.

Joab sends a messenger to David with an update on the battle. The report says, "The men prevailed against us, and we pressed them as far as the entrance of the city gate. Some of the king's servants are dead, including your servant Uriah the Hittite." Then David says to the messenger, "Say to Joab, 'Do not let this thing displease you. Make your battle against the city stronger and overthrow it.' Do what you can to encourage Joab."

When the wife of Uriah hears that her husband is dead, she mourns for her husband. When the time of mourning is over, David has her brought to his house and she becomes his wife; then she bears him a son. But the thing that David has done is evil in the sight of the LORD.

The Prophet Nathan Rebukes David for His Sin

II Sam. 12

The LORD sends Nathan to David. Nathan tells the King a story. "There were two men, one rich, and one poor. The rich man had many livestock, but the poor man only had one ewe lamb. The lamb was like one of the family. A traveler comes to the rich man. Rather than take one of his own animals to feed the traveler, the rich man takes the poor man's ewe lamb to provide a meal for his guest."

David burns with anger against the rich man in Nathan's story. He says, "As the LORD lives, the man who did this should die as well as pay the poor man four times over for his crime."

Then Nathan says to David, "You are the man! Why did you despise the word of the LORD by doing what is evil in his eyes? You killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword of the Ammonites. Now the sword will always be a part of your house. This is what the LORD says, 'Out of your own household I will bring calamity on you. I will take your wives and give them to one who is close to you, and he will sleep with your wives in broad daylight.'"

David says to the prophet, "I have sinned against the LORD." Then Nathan replies, "The LORD has taken away your sin. You are not going to die. However, because you have shown contempt for the LORD, the son born to you will die."

The LORD strikes the child that Uriah's wife had borne to David. The child becomes ill. David pleads with God for help, fasting for seven days. On the seventh day, the child dies. When David learns of the child's death, he changes out of his mourning clothes and goes to the house of the LORD and worships.

David comforts Bathsheba. He makes love to her again. She gives birth to a son who is called Solomon (*peace*). The LORD loves him and tells Nathan to have the child named Jedidiah (*loved by the LORD*).

Amnon's Fatal Family Attraction/Affair/Abuse

II Sam. 13

In the course of time, David's son Amnon falls obsessively in love with Tamar, the sister of David's son Absalom. Amnon has a shrewd advisor named Jonadab, the son of David's brother Shimeah. Amnon tells Jonadab of his secret love for Tamar. Jonadab suggests that Amnon pretend to be ill and request that Tamar come and tend to him. And Amnon does do.

When everyone else was out of his bedroom except for Tamar, Amnon tells his half-sister to sleep with him. She refuses. Then he rapes her. After violating her, Amnon now hates her with intense hatred. He sends her away to her brother Absalom. She tells him of her rape by Amnon. Absalom tells her to be quiet about this. She stays in her brother Absalom's house, a desolate woman.

When David hears of this, he is furious. Absalom never says anything to Amnon about it. But Absalom hates Amnon because of the disgraceful treatment of Tamar.

Absalom Kills His Stepbrother Amnon for Tamar's Rape

II Sam. 13

Two Years later, during a sheepshearing event at Baal Hazor. Absalom invites all the king's sons. He also invites his father David, but the king declines. Absalom then asks his father to let Amnon come join them (*even though Amnon is only a half-brother to Absalom*). After resisting at first, the royal father agrees.

Absalom orders his men, "When Amnon is in high spirits and drunk, I will give the order to kill him." Absalom's men do as they are ordered. After killing Amnon, they leave the party.

Soon word gets to King David that "Absalom has struck down ALL the king's sons." The king falls in deep mourning. But Jonadab, David's nephew, corrects the story. He says, "Only Amnon is dead. Absalom has planned this revenge for two years since the rape of Tamar." David mourns Amnon's death.

Meanwhile, Absalom flees to Geshur, where he will stay for three years. King David longs to go to Absalom. David has finished grieving Amnon's death and is missing his estranged son who is alive.

Absalom Conspires to Be King

II Sam. 14

Joab, the king's military advisor, knows that King David's heart longs for Absalom. He sends for a wise woman from Tekoa and gives her these instructions, "Dress in mourning clothes and act like you are grieving when you come before the king. Ask for the king's help. When he asks what is troubling you, tell him that one of your children got into a fight and killed the other. Now the whole community is asking for the death of my living son, even as I mourn the death of the son he took from me."

When the woman from Tekoa comes before the king, she tells the story Joab told her to say. King David responds, "Go home, and I will issue an order on your behalf. You and your family are pardoned."

The woman speaks bluntly, "Why can't you pardon Absalom and resume relations with your family?" She confesses that Joab put these words in her mouth. David is moved by the woman's story and insight.

The king says to Joab, "Very well, I will do as you desire. Go bring back the young man Absalom."

Joab goes to Geshur and brings Absalom to Jerusalem. But King David does not allow Absalom to see the face of the king or return to his house.

Summary of II Samuel

In all Israel there is not a man as highly praised or as handsome as Absalom. In time, three sons and a daughter are born to Absalom. He names his daughter Tamar, after his sister who was raped.

Absalom lives two years without seeing David's face. Absalom tries to get Joab to order King David to see him, but Joab refuses twice. Frustrated, Absalom orders his men to burn Joab's barley field, which was next to his own field. When Joab confronts Absalom, Absalom says, "I want to see the king's face. If I am guilty of anything, let him put me to death."

So, Joab goes to the king. The king summons Absalom. Absalom bows down before the king. And the king kisses Absalom. Their relationship is cordial, but not close. Absalom has his eyes on the throne.

David Flees Jerusalem to Escape Absalom

II Sam. 15

Before long Absalom has a chariot and horses and fifty loyal men. He gathers at the city gate of Jerusalem every day to meet people on their way to see the king about a complaint. Absalom tells them that David does not have time to hear them. He suggests to them that if he could be appointed a judge then everyone could come to him for justice. He also reached out and embraced the Israelites with a kiss. In this way Absalom steals the hearts of the people.

After four years, Absalom asks the king to let him go to Hebron and worship the LORD there. The king agrees. Absalom sends messengers throughout the tribes to say, "When you hear the trumpets, say, 'Absalom is king of Hebron.'" Two hundred men accompany Absalom from Jerusalem, but they are unaware of what Absalom is up to. Absalom also sends Ahithophel, David's counselor to Hebron. The conspiracy is gaining strength.

A messenger comes to David and tells him the people of Israel are siding with Absalom. David tells his officials in Jerusalem to leave town or risk being overtaken by Absalom. The king sets out with his household behind him. He leaves ten concubines to take care of the palace. At the city gates, all of David's men march past him in support.

Zadok the priest and all the Levites who had carried the ark of the covenant of God are there also. David tells Zadok to take the ark back into the city. David hopes to find favor in the LORD's eyes and return to see it and his dwelling place again. David is placing his hope on the will of God.

The king also tells Zadok to stay in Jerusalem with his blessing. David will wait at the fords in the wilderness until Zadok informs him of any news. David then continues to the Mount of Olives weeping and barefoot. David learns that Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom. David prays for the LORD to turn Ahithophel's counsel into foolishness.

At the top of the Mount of Olives, David sees Hushai the Arkite. David tells him, "Go to the city and pledge your loyalty to Absalom. Then help frustrate the advice that Ahithophel is giving to Absalom. Report any helpful information to Zadok the priest. He can get information to me through his sons.

So Hushai, David's confidant, arrives at Jerusalem as Absalom is entering the city.

David Is Shown Kindness by Ziba (Mephibosheth's Caretaker)

II Sam. 16

David also sees Ziba, the steward of Jonathan's son Mephibosheth, waiting to meet him. He has donkeys loaded with bread, raisin cakes, figs, and wine for David. He tells David that Jonathan's son is staying in

Jerusalem, expecting the Israelites to restore Saul's kingdom for him (*Mephibosheth*) to rule. David then gives all that belongs to Mephibosheth to Ziba (*valid only if David is still king of course*).

Shimei Curses David but David Shows Kindness

II Sam. 16

Near Bahurim, a man from Saul's family comes out cursing and throwing stones at David and his men. David's men want to kill the man, but David tells them to stand down. David suggests that God may have told him to curse David, and perhaps the LORD will bless David by restoring the covenant made long ago to David.

The Advice of Ahithophel

II Sam. 16

When Absalom arrives in Jerusalem, Ahithophel (*Absalom's adviser*) is with him. Hushai the Arkite, David's confidant, comes before Absalom and pretends to pledge his support to him. Absalom first asks his advisor Ahithophel what he should do next. Ahithophel's advice is to sleep with the king's concubines (left to care for the palace) for all Israel to see. Absalom pitches a tent on the roof of the palace and sleeps with the concubines in plain sight.

(In his day, the advice of Ahithophel carried similar weight to one who inquires of God. That is how seriously both David and Absalom regard Ahithophel's advice.)

The Advice of Hushai

II Sam. 17

Next, Ahithophel says to Absalom, "Choose twelve thousand men and pursue David tonight. Attack him while he is weak. Only target the king. Bring everyone else back to you unharmed." This plan seems good to Absalom and all the elders.

But Absalom asks Hushai the Arkite about the plan. Hushai replies, "You know your father. He is hidden in a cave or elsewhere. You risk losing too many men in a hasty attack, and it will cause fear among the ranks. So, I advise: Let all Israel gather around you, and you lead the entire army of men to attack them. This way, neither David nor his men will be left alive."

Absalom and Israel agree that Hushai's advice is better. (For the LORD had determined to frustrate the good advice of Ahithophel to bring disaster on Absalom.)

Hushai tells Zadok and the priests, "Ahithophel has advised Absalom to do one plan, and I have advised a different plan. Go tell David not to spend the night at the fords in the wilderness; he must cross over, or the king and everyone will die."

Zadok's sons, Jonathan and Ahimaaz are staying at En Rogel. A female servant tells them about the word from Zadok. But a young man sees the three of them talking and tells Absalom. Zadok's two sons leave and go to the house of a man in Bahurim. They hide in a well and the well is covered up. When Absalom's men come looking for them, the woman of the house tells the men that Ahimaaz and Jonathan crossed over the brook. The men search without success and return to Jerusalem.

Ahithophel Takes His Life

II Sam. 17

Afterward, the two sons of Zadok climb out of the well and go to King David. They say to him, "Cross the river at once." David and all his people make it across the Jordan River by daybreak. When Ahithophel sees that his plan has not been followed, he goes home and hangs himself.

The Death of Absalom

II Sam. 17

David goes to Mahanaim. Absalom crosses the Jordan with his army. Amasa is appointed as head of the army in place of Joab. The Israelites and Absalom camp in the land of Gilead.

When David enters Mahanaim, the people of the city give David's people bedding, bowls, and pottery, along with food and drink. It is a rare act of kindness in a very unkind territory to David.

David musters his men and appoints over them commanders. He sends out a third of them under the command of Joab, a third under Joab's brother Abishai, and a third under Ittai the Gittite. The king plans to march with them to battle. But the men say, "You must not go, you are worth more than ten thousand of us." So, David stays behind.

David stands by the gate as thousands of men march in units of hundreds and thousands. The king commands that the leaders (Joab, Abishai, and Ittai) must be gentle with his son Absalom. All the troops hear the command.

The battle takes place in the forest of Ephraim. Israel's troops are routed by David army. In that battle, Absalom happens upon David's men and goes after them. He is riding a mule and Absalom's hair gets caught in the thick branches of an oak tree. Absalom is hanging in midair, while the mule keeps going.

One of David's men tells his leader, Joab, "I just saw Absalom hanging in an oak tree."

Joab asks why the soldier did not strike Absalom dead at the oak tree and reap a reward. The man says that the king commanded everyone to be gentle and protect his son Absalom. But Joab cannot bear to let Absalom go unpunished for causing the death of so many Hebrews, including Joab's own brother. So, he takes three javelins and plunges them into Absalom's heart while he is still alive in the tree.

Joab then sounds the trumpet, and the troops stop pursuing Israel. They take Absalom's body and throw it into a big pit and cover it with rocks. All the Israelites flee to their homes.

During his lifetime, Absalom had erected a large pillar in the King's Valley as a monument to himself. He named the pillar after himself, and it is called Absalom's Monument to this day.

David Mourns His Son Absalom

II Sam. 18

Ahimaaz, son of Zadok, says, "Let me carry the news to the king that the LORD has given him the victory." Joab sends a Cushite soldier instead. Ahimaaz then asks if he can at least run behind the Cushite. Joab agrees. However, Ahimaaz outruns the Cushite and arrives first.

David is sitting between the inner and outer gates of Mahanaim when he sees a lone runner coming towards the city. The king tells the watchman he must be bringing good news. The watchman sees a second runner and David assumes more good news.

The first runner, Ahimaaz, tells the news that the battle is victorious and bows before David. The king asks if Absalom is safe. Ahimaaz avoided the question, saying he was not sure. Then the Cushite arrives. The king asks, "In the young Absalom safe?" The Cushite replies, "May the enemies of my lord the king be like that young man." (*In other words, "may all your enemies be dead like Absalom."*)

David is shaken. He goes to the room over the gateway and weeps. "If only I had died instead of you," he cries.

II Sam. 19

Joab learns that the king is weeping for Absalom. For the whole army, the great victory day has turned into mourning. The soldiers are ashamed to come into Mahanaim because they made the king sad.

Joab goes up to the king and says, "You have humiliated the men who saved your life. You love those who hate you and hate those who love you. Now these men feel that they mean nothing to you. It is time for you to go out and encourage them. If you don't, there will not be a man left to fight again for you by the end of the day. So, the king gets up and takes his place in the gateway of Mahanaim. The men come out and stand before their king. David shows them the respect they needed and deserved.

The Israelites who sided with Absalom flee to their homes in defeat.

David Returns to Jerusalem

II Sam. 19

Throughout the tribes of Israel, the people who supported Absalom are saying, "David delivered us from the hands of the Philistines earlier. Now he has fled to Mahanaim to escape Absalom. Absalom has died. Why is David not back in Jerusalem our capital where a king belongs?"

King David sends a message to Zadok and Abiathar, the priests: "Ask the elders of Judah why they have not invited the king back to his palace? And tell Amasa that I want him to be the commander of my army in place of Joab." By doing so, he wins over the hearts of the men of Judah. They ask David and his men to return, as far as the Jordan River.

The men of Judah come to Gilgal. They meet the king and bring him across the Jordan. Shimei, the Benjaminite from Bahurim, hurries to meet the king. With him are a thousand Benjamites and Ziba the steward of Saul's household. When Shimei crosses the Jordan, he falls before the king and begs for forgiveness for the way he had treated the king earlier. The king says to Shimei, "You shall not die."

Mephibosheth, Saul's grandson, is taken to meet the king at the river. David says to him, "Why didn't you go with me?" He says, "I wanted to, but Ziba my servant betrayed me. Do whatever you wish. All my grandfather's descendants deserve death, but you have given me a place at your table. I am at your mercy." At first the king wanted to divide Mephibosheth's land that the king had earlier given to Ziba, but Mephibosheth asks the king to let Ziba keep it all now that the king is back home safely.

Barzillai the Gileadite had travelled with the king to see him cross the Jordan River before returning to his own home in Mahanaim. The king asks Barzillai, who is elderly, to come live his remaining days in Jerusalem. Barzillai insists on going home. He does ask if the king would let his servant Kimham go in his stead to Jerusalem with the king. David agrees.

All the people then cross the Jordan.

Soon the people of Israel are asking, "Why did the men of Judah steal the king away?" The men of Judah answer, "We did this because the king is from our tribe." The men of Israel answer back, "We have ten shares in the king, so we have a greater claim. Besides, we were the first to suggest bringing the king to Jerusalem."

But the men of Judah press their claims even more than the men of Israel.

The Rebellion of Sheba

II Sam. 20

Summary of II Samuel

A troublemaker named Sheba happens to be there that day. He is an Israelite from the tribe of Benjamin. He starts a rebellion saying, "We have no share in David, no part in Jesse's son!" The men of Israel desert David and follow Sheba. The men of Judah stay with David all the way from the Jordan to Jerusalem.

When David gets back to the palace in Jerusalem, he takes his ten concubines that Absalom had forced himself upon in public and puts them in a house under guard. He provides for them but does not have relations with them. They will remain in confinement for the rest of their days, as widows.

The king says to Amasa, "Summon the men of Judah to join me in three days and be here yourself. But Amasa takes longer than David wanted, so he says to Abishai, "Take you master's men and pursue Sheba or Sheba will be more trouble than Absalom." Abishai gathers Joab's men, including the Kerethites, the Pelethites, and the mighty warriors, to pursue Sheba.

At the great rock in Gibeon, Amasa comes to meet them. Joab walks up to Amasa and plunges a dagger into his stomach. One of Joab's men stand beside the body of Amasa, and says, "Whoever is for David, let him follow Joab!" After Amasa's body is removed from the road, everyone went on with Joab to pursue Sheba.

Sheba passes through the tribal territories of Israel and gathers followers along the way. But the troops with Joab catch up with Sheba and attack him in Abel Beth Maakah. Joab's men start building a siege ramp to forcefully enter the city. A wise woman called from the city to speak to Joab. She tells Joab that this is a mother-city in the land of Israel. Do not destroy it. Joab tells her he only wants the head of Sheba of Bikri, and the city can be untouched.

The woman goes to the people with the news. They cut off the head of Sheba and throw it over the wall.

David's Officials and Priests

II Sam. 20

Joab is now over the entire army again. Benaiah is over the Kerethites and Pelethites; Adoniram oversees forced labor; Jehoshaphat is the official recorder. Zadok and Abiathar oversee the priests. Ira the Jairite is David's priest.

Famine Causes King David to Avenge Saul's Injustice to The Gibeonites

II Sam. 21

There is a famine for three years. David seeks the face of the LORD. The LORD says, "It is on account of Saul putting the Gibeonites to death years earlier. David speaks to the Gibeonites. (*The Gibeonites are survivors of the Amorites. The Israelites had sworn to spare them, but Saul had tried to annihilate them.*) David wants to make atonement. The Gibeonites say, "Let seven of Saul's male descendants be given to us to be killed and their bodies exposed before the LORD at Gibeah of Saul – the LORD's chosen one."

The king agrees to their terms. He spares Mephibosheth (Jonathan's son), but Armoni, Mephibosheth (*a different one*) and five others are selected. He hands them over to the Gibeonites. All seven of them fall together, during the first days of the barley harvest. The bodies remain exposed on the ground.

Rizpah, the sister of Armoni and Mephibosheth, goes and remains by their exposed bodies for days until the rain finally pours down on them. When David learns of her action, he goes to Jabesh Gilead and retrieves the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan. The bodies of the seven are then gathered up. The bones of Saul and Jonathan are buried in the tomb of Saul's father Kish at Zela in the territory of the Benjamin tribe.

At War with The Philistines

II Sam. 21

Once again there is war between the Philistines and Israel. A Philistine named Ishbi-Benob¹ says that he will kill David. But Abishai comes to David's rescue and kills the Philistine. David's men refuse to let David go with them into battle anymore, to keep Israel safe with a king.

In a second battle at Gob, Sibbekai kills Saph². In a third battle, Elhanan the Bethlehemite kills the brother of Goliath the Gittite³. In still another battle at Gath, David's nephew Jonathan kills a huge man with six fingers⁴ on each hand and six toes on each foot. These four feared Philistines were descendants of Rapha in Gath, and they fell at the hands of David and his men.

David Praises The LORD For Deliverance from The Philistines and From Saul

II Sam. 22

David sings to the LORD the words of this song:

"The LORD is my rock, in whom I take refuge.
He is my stronghold, my refuge, and my savior.
In my distress I called to the LORD.
From his temple he heard my voice.
Smoke arose from his nostrils.
Fire came from his mouth.

The LORD has dealt with me according to my righteousness.
According to the cleanness of my hands he has rewarded me.
For I have kept the ways of the LORD.
I am not guilty of turning away from my God.

As for God, his way is perfect, The LORD's word if flawless.
For it is God who arms me with strength,
And keeps my way secure.
He gives his king great victories.
He shows kindness to his anointed,
To David and his descendants forever."

David's Final Words

II Sam. 23

"The Spirit of the LORD spoke through me;
'When one rules over people in righteousness,
When he rules in the fear of God,
He is like the brightness after rain
That brings grass from the earth.'

"If my house were not right with God,
He would not have made with me an everlasting covenant.
Surely, he would not bring to fruition my salvation
And grant me my every desire."

Summary of II Samuel

David's Mighty Men (Top Thirty-ish)				II Samuel 23
#	NAME	CONNECTION	MIGHTY TITLE	NOTES
1	Josheb-basshebeth	Tachemonite	Chief of the Three	killed 800 in one battle with spear
2	Eleazar	son of Dodo	2nd of the Three	defeated Philistines in a battle all by himself
3	Shammah	Hararite	3rd of the Three	defeated Philistines at Lehi
4	Unnamed #1	-	Listed next to the Three. These joined David in the cave at Adullam and risked their safety to bring him water from the well at Bethlehem. They got it for him, but then he humbly refused to drink it because it risked their lives.	
5	Unnamed #2	-		
6	Unnamed #3	-		
7	Abishai	brother of Joab	Chief of the Thirty	most renowned of the Thirty, but not a part of the Three.
8	Benaiah	son of Jehoiada		from Kabzeel. David's bodyguard.
9	Asahel	brother of Joab		
10	Elhanan	son of Dodo		of Bethlehem
11	Shammah	of Harod		
12	Elika	of Harod		
13	Helez	the Paltite		
14	Ira	son of Ikkesh		of Tekoa
15	Abiezer			of Anathoth
16	Mebunnai	the Hushathite		
17	Zalmon	the Ahohite		
18	Maharai	of Netophah		
19	Ittai	son of Ribai		of Gibeah of the Benjamites
20	Benaiah			of Pirathon
21	Hiddai			of the wadis of Gaash
22	Abi-albon	the Arbathite		of Bahurim
23	Azmaveth			
24	Eliabba			of Shaalbon
25	Jonathan	son of Shammah		a Hararite. One of the sons of Jashen
26	Ahiam	son of Sharar		a Hararite. One of the sons of Jashen
27	Eliphelet	son of Ahasbai		of Maacah
28	Eliam	son of Ahithophel		A Gilonite
29	Hezro			of Carmel
30	Paarai	Arbite		
31	Igal	son of Nathan		of Zobah
32	Bani	The Gadite		
33	Zelek	The Ammonite		
34	Naharai			of Beeroth. The armor-bearer of Joab
35	Ira	The Ithrite		
36	Gareb	The Ithrite		
37	Uriah	The Hittite		
Not on the list		Joab, Commander of the Army - killed Absalom /sided with Adonijah, not Solomon		

The Senseless Census

II Sam. 24

The anger of the LORD burns against Israel, and he incites David against them, saying, "Go and take a census of Israel and Judah." The king tells Joab, "Go from Dan to Beersheba and enroll the fighting men."

Joab says to the king, "Why?" The king overrules Joab's objection, and the census begins. The census takers (*army officers*) travel from town to town from Dan to Beersheba. After going through the entire land for nine months and twenty days, Joab and his commanders come back to Jerusalem.

The census reveals that there are eight hundred thousand able-bodied men in Israel and five hundred thousand more in Judah. David's conscience begins to bother him regarding the census. He says to the LORD, "I have sinned greatly. Now, LORD, I beg you, take away my guilt."

Before David gets up the next morning, the LORD comes to Gad the prophet, the king's seer. Gad then delivers the message to David, "This is what the LORD says: You have three options: either there will be three years of famine; or three months of fleeing your enemies while they constantly pursue you; or the three days of plague in the land. Choose one and I will carry it out against you."

David says, "Let us fall into the hands of the LORD, who is merciful; but do not let me fall into human hands."

So, the LORD sends a plague on Israel. Seventy thousand people die from Dan to Beersheba. This distresses David even more. As the angel stretches out his hand near the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite to destroy Jerusalem, David says, "Enough! I am the one who sinned. I am the shepherd. These are but sheep. Let your hand fall on me and my family instead."

The Altar That Stops the Plague

II Sam. 24

Once the king confessed to the LORD, Gad goes to David and tells him, "Go and build an altar on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite. So, David goes to buy the threshing floor from Araunah. Araunah tries to give it to the king, but David replies, "I insist on paying you. I will not sacrifice to the LORD on an altar that costs me nothing."

David buys the threshing floor. He builds an altar and sacrifices burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. Then the LORD answers his prayer, and the plague on Israel is stopped.

Summary of I Kings

Chapters 1 and 2

The Final Days of David

The King is Old - The Princes Are Positioning for the Crown

I Kings 1

David is so old he could not keep warm even under the covers. A young virgin is brought in to lie beside him to keep him warm. The woman chosen is a virgin named Abishag, a Shunamite. She takes care of David, but the king does not have sexual relations with her.

One of David's sons, Adonijah, whose mother is Haggith, comes forward and says, "I will be king." He gets support from Joab (*the army commander*) and Abiathar the priest. But he does not get the support from Nathan the prophet or the special guard or his brother Solomon. David is not aware of Adonijah's claim to be king.

Nathan confers with Bathsheba, Solomon's mother. He advises her to remind David of his words long ago, "Surely Solomon your son will be king after me." Nathan also says that he will come in after her and verify her words to David.

Bathsheba goes to David and reminds him of his promise to her. She also tells David that Adonijah is already going through the rituals and ceremonial gatherings to have himself proclaimed king.

Nathan enters the room and shares the same words with David. Zadok the priest, and Benaiah son of Jehoiada, are also called in by David. David says to them, "Take Solomon and mount him on my personal mule and go with him to Gihon. Nathan and Zadok are to anoint Solomon king over Israel. I have appointed him ruler over Israel and Judah." The three men do as David asked.

Meanwhile, Adonijah is with his guests at his coronation when they hear the royal trumpet. A priest comes into the room and announces that King David has made Solomon king. At this, all Adonijah's guests get up and disperse. Adonijah is now afraid for his life. When Solomon learns of this, he has Adonijah come before him and says, if you show yourself worthy, not a hair of your head will fall to the ground." Adonijah bows before the king, and Solomon says, "Go to your home."

Old King David Instructs New King Solomon

I Kings 2

"Be strong and courageous. Keep the commandments as written in the law of Moses. Pass this wisdom on to your heirs. If they are faithful to and walk with the LORD God, you will have a successor on the throne of Israel."

There are some unresolved matters during my reign for you to deal with at the start of your reign.

Joab son of Zeruah: He murdered two commanders of the army of Israel (Abner and Amasa) during time of peace for things which happened during a time war. Do not let his gray head do gown to Sheol in peace.

Barzillai the Gileadite: He was loyal to me. Let his sons be a part of those who eat at your table.

Shimei the Benjaminite: He cursed me when I fled Absalom. He begged me to spare him when I returned as king. I kept the peace and promised to spare him. You are now king and made no such promise. Bring his gray head down with blood to Sheol.

David's Death

I Kings 2

Then David slept with his ancestors and was buried in the city of David. David had reigned forty years; seven years in Hebron and thirty-three years in Jerusalem.

Solomon Consolidates His Reign

Adonijah, who attempted to become the king at first, goes to Solomon's mother Bathsheba and asks a favor. He wants Bathsheba to ask King Solomon to give him Abishag the Shunammite as his wife. Bathsheba relays the request and adds her own request: "do not refuse me." The king refuses the request of Adonijah and the request of Bathsheba, saying "As the LORD lives, today Adonijah shall be put to death." King Solomon sends Benaiah to strike him down with the sword, and Adonijah dies.

When Joab, who supported Adonijah to be king, hears the news of Adonijah's fate, he takes sanctuary in the tabernacle of the LORD. Upon orders of the king, Benaiah strike Joab down.

Then the king sends for Shimei and tells him to build a house in Jerusalem and never leave the city limits or he will die. Shimei builds a house and lives there for three years. One day some of his slaves are missing and he leaves town to look for them. When Solomon learns Shimei has broken his vow, he has Benaiah strike Shimei down, and he dies.

So, the kingdom of Israel is now established, having passed from David to Solomon.

About the Author

The **Reverend Dennis W. Spence** is a United Methodist minister who retired from active pastoral ministry in 2018. With a career spanning forty-three years, he served as an ordained elder within the Arkansas Conference. His journey into ministry began after graduating from Hendrix College in 1974. Rev. Spence pursued further academic preparation at Emory University's Candler School of Theology in Atlanta, Georgia, where he earned a Master of Divinity degree in 1977. In the early 1980s, he engaged in postgraduate studies at St. Paul School of Theology, focusing on Apocalyptic Literature under the guidance of Professor Lindsay Pherigo. Despite being assigned to a distant region of the state for clerical duties, Rev. Spence remained dedicated to his scholarly pursuits and continued to nurture his passion for learning.

In retirement, Rev. Spence found himself isolating due to the Covid pandemic, prompting him to seize the opportunity to deepen his biblical knowledge. He's completed over forty short courses at the Israel Bible Center, led by professors who are Jewish followers of Jesus. Each course, comprising approximately five hours of online training, enabled Rev. Spence to actively engage with professors. He participated in roundtable discussions involving Jewish, Christian, and academic scholars from institutions like Asbury, Berkeley, Duke, Vanderbilt, and others worldwide.

Retirement and the pandemic provided the opportunity for Rev. Spence to undertake Dr. Robert Alter's three-thousand-page translation and commentary of the Hebrew Bible. Dr. Alter's commentary, published in 2018, is academic-based rather than faith-based, quietly guiding readers to the literary and historical dimensions of the text. Additionally, Rev. Spence, never one to shy away from research and study, read the writings of the late and renowned Jewish scholar, Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks. Rabbi Sacks served as Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the British Commonwealth from 1991 to 2013. His five-volume work, *Covenant and Conversation*, is a two-thousand-page commentary that offers numerous modern Jewish insights into the Torah. The works and devotion of Dr. Alter and Rabbi Sacks have extended Rev. Spence's knowledge and appreciation of the Hebrew Bible.

Not every book in the Bible contains narrative, but a core story runs throughout from Genesis to Revelation, as wonderfully described in Sandra Richter's *Epic of Eden*. For several years, Rev. Spence has been diligently working on his own summary of the Bible's overarching narrative. In each of his Bible study classes, he provides a verse-by-verse narrative and commentary to guide students in their biblical study and exploration.

Rev. Spence approaches his work with a faith that is heavily influenced by the United Methodist Church, Wesleyan theology, Protestant principles, and a deep love for the sacred literature of Christianity. Rev. Spence *generously* shares his knowledge and love of scripture to extend his ministry in retirement.

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