



C. H. MacKintosh

THE
LIFE AND
TIMES
OF
DAVID,

King of Israel



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INTRODUCTION

I SAMUEL I-15

24 The steps which led to the setting up of a king in Israel are easily traced, and easily accounted for, by all who have studied, with any attention, the humbling history of the human heart, either as presented in themselves or in others.

In the opening chapters of 1 Samuel, we are furnished with a most instructive and solemn picture of Israel's condition. The house of Elkanah is taken up by the sacred penman as a striking illustration of Israel after the flesh, and Israel after the Spirit. Elkanah had two wives; the name of one was Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.

Thus, we have, in the domestic circle of this Ephrathite, the early scenes of Sarah and Hagar enacted over again. Hannah was the barren woman, and she was made to feel it deeply, for, "her adversary also provoked her sore, for to make



her fret, because the LORD had shut up her womb.”

The barren woman is always presented in Scripture as the type of nature’s ruined and helpless condition. There is no ability to do anything for God; no energy to bring forth any fruit to Him, all is death and barrenness. Such is the real condition of every child of Adam. He can neither do anything for God nor for himself, as regards his eternal destiny. He is emphatically “without strength,” he is “a dry tree,” “a heath in the desert.” Such is the lesson taught us by the barren woman.

However, the Lord caused His grace to abound over all Hannah’s weakness and need, and put a song of praise into her mouth. He enabled her to say, “Mine horn is exalted in the LORD; my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; because I rejoice in thy salvation.” It is the Lord’s special province to make the barren woman rejoice. He alone can say, “Sing, O barren . . . thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the LORD” (Isaiah 54:1).

Hannah realized this, and widowed Israel will, ere long, realize it also, “for thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of Hosts is His name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel.” The beautiful song of Hannah is the soul’s thankful acknowledgment of God’s actions in reference to Israel. “The LORD killeth and maketh alive: He bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up. The LORD maketh poor and maketh rich: He bringeth low and lifteth up. He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory.” All this will be most fully exemplified in Israel in the latter day; and it is now exemplified in the person of every one whom, through grace, is raised from his ruined condition in nature, to blessedness and peace in Jesus.



The birth of Samuel filled up a great blank, not only in the heart of Hannah, but doubtless in the heart of every faithful Israelite who sighed for the true interests of the Lord's house, and the purity of the Lord's offering; both of which were alike disregarded and trampled upon by the unholy sons of Eli. In Hannah's desire for "a *man-child*," we perceive not merely the development of the heart of a *mother*, but that of an *Israelite*. She had no doubt beheld and mourned over the ruin of everything connected with the temple of the Lord. The dimmed eye of Eli; the vile actions of Hophni and Phinehas; the fading lamp; the desecrated temple; the despised sacrifice; all conspired to tell Hannah that there was a real want, which could alone be supplied by the precious gift of a man-child from the Lord. Hence she says to her husband. "I will not go up until the child be weaned, and then I will bring him, *that he may appear before the LORD, and there abide for ever.*" "Abide for ever!" Nothing short of this could satisfy the longing soul of Hannah. It was not the mere matter of wiping away her own reproach that rendered Samuel so precious in her eyes. No! she longed to see "a faithful priest," standing before the Lord; and, by faith, her eye rested on one who was to abide there for ever. Precious, elevating faith; that holy principle which lifts the soul above the depressing influence of things seen and temporal, into the light of things unseen and eternal.

In 1 Samuel chapter 3, we have the prediction of the terrible downfall of Eli's house. "And it came to pass at that time, when Eli was laid down in his place, *and his eyes began to wax dim that he could not see*; and ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was, and Samuel was laid down to sleep; *that the LORD called Samuel*" (vv. 2-4). This was very expressive; solemnly expressive. Eli's eyes dim, and the Lord's call to Samuel; in other words, Eli's house is passing away, and the faithful priest is about to enter the scene.



Samuel runs to Eli, but alas! all the latter could say was “*Lie down again.*” He had no message for the child. Hoary and dim, he could spend his time in sleep and darkness, while the Lord’s voice was sounding so very near him. Most solemn warning! Eli was a priest of the Lord, but he failed to walk watchfully; failed to order his house according to the testimonies of God; failed to restrain his sons; hence, we see the sad end to which he came. “And the LORD said to Samuel, Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle. In that day I will perform against Eli all things that I have spoken concerning his house: when I begin, I will also make an end. For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not” (vv. 11-13).

“Whatsoever a man soweth,” says the apostle, “that shall he also reap.” How true is this in the history of every child of Adam! How peculiarly true in the history of every child of God! According to our sowing, shall be our reaping. So Eli was made to feel; and so shall the writer and the reader of this, there is much more of solemn, practical reality in this divine statement than many are apt to imagine. If we indulge in a wrong current of thought; if we adopt a wrong habit of conversation; if we pursue a wrong line of acting, we must inevitably reap the fruits of it sooner or later. (The statement in the text, I need hardly say, does not by any means interfere with the eternal stability of divine grace, and the perfect acceptance of the believer, in all the acceptableness of Christ before God. This is a great foundation truth. Christ is the believer’s life, and Christ is his righteousness. Hence, the ground of his peace can never be touched. He may lose the enjoyment of it, but the thing itself is beyond him. God has established it upon an indestructible basis, and before ever it can be touched, the fact



of Christ's resurrection must be called in question, for clearly He could not be where He is if the believer's peace were not perfectly settled. In order to have perfect peace, I must know my perfect justification; and in order to know my perfect justification, I must know, by faith in God's word, that Christ has made a perfect atonement. This is the divine order; perfect atonement as the ground of my perfect justification; and perfect justification as the ground of my perfect peace. God has joined those three together, and let not man's unbelieving heart put them asunder. Hence, therefore, the statement in the text will not, I trust, be misunderstood or misapplied. The principle contained therein may be thus illustrated: if my child goes too near the fire, He may injure himself and grieve and displease me; but he is my child all the while. The apostolic statement is as broad as possible. "Whatever a man soweth that shall he also reap." He does not say whether it is a converted or an unconverted man; and therefore the passage should have its full application. It could not possibly touch the question of pure and absolute grace.)

May this reflection lead us to more holy watchfulness in our ways; may we be more careful to "sow to the Spirit," that so, of the Spirit, we may "reap life everlasting."

1 Samuel chapter 4 presents a humiliating picture of Israel's condition in connection with the declining house of Eli. "Now Israel went out against the Philistines to battle, and pitched beside Ebenezer: and the Philistines pitched in Aphek. And the Philistines put themselves in array against Israel: and when they joined battle, Israel was smitten before the Philistines; and they slew of the army in the field about four thousand men" (vv. 1-2). Here Israel was being made to realize the curse of a broken law. (See Deuteronomy 28:25.) They could not stand before their enemies, being weak and powerless due to their disobedience.



And observe the nature and ground of their confidence, in this their time of need and pressure. “And when the people were come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, Wherefore hath the LORD smitten us today before the Philistines? Let us fetch the Ark of the Covenant of the LORD out of Shiloh unto us, that when it cometh among us, it may save us out of the hand of our enemies” (v. 3). Alas! what a miserable ground of confidence. Not a word about *the Lord Himself*. They thought not of Him as the source of their strength; they made not Him their shield and buckler. No! they trusted in the ark; they vainly imagined that it could save them—how vain! How could it avail them anything when unaccompanied by the presence of the Lord of Hosts—the God of the armies of Israel? Impossible! But He was no longer there; He had been grieved away by their unconfessed and unjudged sin; nor could any symbol or ordinance ever take His place.

However, Israel vainly imagined that the ark would do all for them, and great was their joy, though not well founded, when it made its appearance among them, accompanied not by Jehovah, but by the wicked priests, Hophni and Phinehas. “And when the ark of the covenant of the LORD came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again” (v.4). All this was very imposing; but it was hollow; their triumph was as baseless as it was unbecoming. They ought to have known much better than to make such an empty display. Their shout of triumph harmonized badly with their low moral condition in the sight of God; and yet it will ever be found that those who know least of themselves set up the highest pretensions, and assume the highest position. The Pharisee, in the gospel, looked down with an air of proud indifference on the self-abased publican; he imagined himself very high up, and the publican very low down in the scale; yet how different were God’s thoughts about the two!



Thus it is, the broken and contrite heart will ever be the dwelling-place of God, who, blessed be His name, knows how to lift up and comfort every such heart as none else can do. Such is His peculiar work—the work in which He delights.

But the men of this world will always attach importance to high pretensions. They like them, and, generally speaking, give a high place in their thoughts to those who assume to be somewhat. On the other hand, they will seek to put the really self-abased man still lower. Thus, in the instructive scene before us in this chapter, the Philistines attached no small importance to the shout of the men of Israel. It was like themselves, and therefore they could apprehend and appreciate it. “And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they said, What meaneth the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews? And they understood that the ark of the LORD was come into the camp. And the Philistines were afraid; for they said, God is come into the camp” (vv. 6-7). They naturally supposed that the shout of triumph was based on a reality. They did not see what was beneath the surface; they understood not the meaning of a defiled priesthood; a despised sacrifice; a desecrated temple. They beheld the outward symbol, and imagined that power accompanied it, hence their fear. How little did they know that their fear and Israel’s triumph were alike groundless. “Be strong,” said they, “and quit yourselves like men, O ye Philistines, that ye be not servants to the Hebrews, as they have been to you: quit yourselves *like men*, and fight” (v. 9). Here was the resource of the Philistines; “quit yourselves like men.” Israel could not do this. If prevented by sin from bringing the resources of God to bear upon their circumstances, they were weaker than other men; Israel’s only hope was in God, and if God were not there; if it were a mere conflict between man and man, an Israelite was no match for a Philistine. The truth of this



was most fully established on the occasion to which we are referring. “The Philistines fought, and Israel was smitten” (v. 10). How else could it be? Israel could but be smitten and fly, when their shield and buckler—even God Himself—was not in their midst. They were smitten; the glory departed from them; the ark was taken and they were shorn of their strength. Their shout of triumph was exchanged for the piercing cry of sorrow. Their portion was defeat and shame, and the aged Eli, whom we may regard as the representative of the existing system of things, fell with that system, and was buried in its ruins.

1 Samuel chapters 5 and 6 embrace the period during which “Ichabod” was written upon the nation of Israel. During this time, God ceased to act publicly for Israel, and the ark of His presence was carried about from city to city of the uncircumcised Philistines. This period is full of instruction. The ark of God amongst strangers, and Israel, for the time being, set aside, are circumstances which cannot fail to interest the mind, and fix the attention of the intelligent and thoughtful student of Scripture.

“And the Philistines took the ark of God, and brought it from Ebenezer unto Ashdod. When the Philistines took the ark of God, they brought it into the house of Dagon, and set it by Dagon” (vv. 1-2). Here we are presented with the sad and humiliating result of Israel’s unfaithfulness. With what a careless hand and faithless heart had they kept the ark of God, when it could ever be brought to find a lodging-place in the temple of Dagon! Truly, Israel had failed. They had let go everything. They had given up that which was most sacred, to be profaned and blasphemed by the uncircumcised.

And observe the house of Dagon was deemed sufficiently sacred for the ark of Jehovah, that ark which belonged to the holiest of all. The shadow of Dagon was to be substituted



for the wings of the Cherubim, and the beams of the divine glory. Such were the thoughts of the lords of the Philistines; but not so God's thoughts. Israel had failed, no doubt, in defending the ark. They had failed to recognize the great truth that it should ever have been connected with the presence of God amongst them. All this might be true; and, moreover, the lords of the Philistines might presume to insult the sacred symbol of the divine presence by impiously associating it with Dagon their god. In a word, the Israelites might prove faithless, and the Philistines profane, but the God of Israel must ever be true to himself—ever true to His own holiness and Dagon must fall prostrate before the ark of His presence. "And when they of Ashdod, arose early on the morrow, behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the earth before the ark of the LORD. And they took Dagon, and set him in his place again. And when they arose early on the morrow morning, behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the ground before the ark of the LORD; and the head of Dagon, and both the palms of his hands, were cut off upon the threshold: only the stump of Dagon was left to him" (vv. 3-4).

Now, we can hardly conceive anything more depressing or humiliating, to all appearance, than the condition of things at this crisis, in Israel's history. They, beheld the ark snatched from their midst. They had proved themselves unfit and unable to occupy the place of God's witnesses in the view of the nations around them. And then, as to the grounds of triumph possessed by the enemies of the truth, it was enough to say; "The ark is in the house of Dagon." This was terrible, truly terrible, when looked at from one point of view; but, oh! how ineffably glorious when looked at from another! True, Israel had failed. They had let go everything that was sacred and precious. They had allowed the enemy to lay their



honor in the dust, and trample on their glory; yet God was above all; beyond all; beneath all. Here was the deep source of consolation to every faithful heart. Truly, God was there, and He showed himself in wondrous power and glory. If Israel would not act in defense of God's truth, He must act Himself, and so He did. The lords of the Philistines had vanquished Israel, but the gods of the Philistines must fall prostrate before that ark, which, of old, had driven back the waters of Jordan. Here was divine triumph. In the darkness and solitude of the house of Dagon; where there was no eye to see, no ear to hear; the God of Israel was acting in defense of those great principles of truth that His Israel had so failed to maintain. Dagon fell, and, in his fall, proclaimed the honor of the God of Israel. The darkness of the moment only afforded an opportunity for the divine glory to shine out in all its brilliancy. The scene was so thoroughly emptied of the creature that the Creator could show Himself in His own proper character. "Man's extremity was God's opportunity." His failure made room for the divine faithfulness. The Philistines had proved stronger than Israel; but Jehovah was stronger than Dagon.

Now all this is replete with instruction and encouragement at a time like the present, when the people of God are so sadly declining from that high tone of devotedness and separation that ought to characterize them. We should bless the Lord for the full assurance of His faithfulness; "He cannot deny Himself" (2 Timothy 2:13). "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his. And, let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity" (2 Timothy 2:19). Hence, in darkest times, He will maintain His truth, and raise up a witness for Himself, even though it should be in the house of Dagon. Christians may depart from God's principles; but the princi-



ples remain the same; their purity, their power, their heavenly virtue, are in no wise affected by the fickleness and inconsistency of faithless professors; and, in the end, truth will triumph.

However, the effort of the Philistines to keep the ark of God amongst them proved a complete failure. They could not make Dagon and Jehovah dwell together; how awfully blasphemous the attempt “What concord hath Christ with Belial?” None whatever. The standard of God can never be lowered so as to accommodate itself to the principles that govern the men of this world; and the attempt to hold Christ with one hand and the world with the other, must issue in shame and confusion of face. Yet how many are making that effort! How many are there who seem to make it the great question how much of the world they can retain without sacrificing the name and privileges of Christians? This is a deadly evil; a fearful snare of Satan, and it may, with strict propriety, be denominated the most refined selfishness. It is bad enough for men to walk in all the lawlessness and corruption of their own hearts; but to connect their own evil with the holy name of Christ is the very climax of guilt. “Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, . . . Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit. Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not, and come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations?” (Jeremiah 7:3, 9-10). Again, we read, as one of the special characteristics of the last days, that men shall have “a form of godliness; but deny the, power thereof.” The form suits the worldly heart, because it serves to keep the conscience at ease, while the heart enjoys the world in all its attractiveness. What a delusion! How needful the apostolic



admonition, “*from such turn, away!*” Satan’s masterpiece is the amalgamation of things apparently Christian with things decidedly unholy; he deceives more effectually by this scheme than any other, and we need more real spiritual wisdom to detect it in consequence. The Lord grant us this, for He knows how much we need it.

We come to chapter 7, passing over much that is valuable in chapters 5 and 6, and now come to dwell, for a little, upon Israel’s happy restoration, in connection with the ministry of “the faithful priest.”

Israel had been allowed to mourn, for many a day, the absence of the ark; their spirits drooped under the withering influence of idolatry, and at length their affections began to go out after the Lord. But, in this revival, we learn how deeply they had been sunk in death. This is always the case. When Jacob, of old, was called upon to go up to Bethel, from amid the defilement of Shechem, he had but little idea of how he and his family had become entangled in the meshes of idolatry. But the call to “*go up to Bethel,*” roused his dormant energies, quickened his conscience, and sharpened his moral perception. Hence, he says to his household, “Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments.” The very idea of Bethel, as contrasted with Shechem, exerted a reviving influence on the soul of Jacob; and he, being revived himself, was enabled to lead others also in fresh power.

Thus is it with Jacob’s seed, in this chapter. “And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the LORD with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and *prepare your hearts unto the LORD*, and serve him *only*; and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines” (v. 3). We observe here what a downward course Israel had been pursuing in connection



with the house of Eli. The first step in evil is to place confidence in a form, apart from God. Apart, too, from those principles which make the form valuable. The next step is, to set up an idol. Hence, we find Israel saying of the ark, "that it may save us;" and the next thing is, "Put *away* the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you."

Reader, is there not a solemn admonition in all this for the professing church? Truly there is. The present is, pre-eminently, a day of form without power. The spirit of cold and uninfluential formalism is moving upon the face of Christendom's troubled waters, and soon all will settle down in the death-like calm of false profession, which will only be broken in upon by "the shout of the archangel and the trump of God."

However, the attitude assumed by Israel, in the 7th chapter, forms a perfect contrast to the scene in the 4th chapter. "And Samuel said, Gather all Israel to Mizpeh, and I will pray for you unto the LORD. And they gathered together to Mizpeh, and drew water, and poured it out before the LORD, and fasted on that day, and said there, We have sinned against the LORD" (vv. 5-6). This was real work. We can say, *God is here*. There is no confidence in a mere symbol or lifeless form; there is no empty pretension, or vain assumption; no shout or baseless vaunting, all is deep and solemn reality. The earnest cry; the water poured out; the fast; the confession, all tell out the mighty change which had taken place in Israel's moral condition. They now betake themselves to the faithful priest; and, through him, to the Lord Himself. They speak not now of fetching the ark; no; their word is, "Cease not to *cry* unto the LORD our God for us, that *he* will save us out of the hand of the Philistines. And Samuel took a sucking-lamb, and offered it for a burnt offering wholly to the LORD: and Samuel cried unto the LORD for Israel; and the LORD heard him"



(vv. 8-9). Here was the source of Israel's power. The sucking-lamb gave a new aspect to their circumstances; it was the turning point in their history on this occasion.

And, observe, the Philistines seem to have been in total ignorance of all that was going on between Jehovah and Israel. They, doubtless, imagined that, inasmuch as they heard no shout of triumph, the Israelites were, if possible, in a more impoverished condition than before. They do not make the earth to ring again, as in chapter 4, but, there was a silent work going on, which a Philistine's eye could not see, nor a Philistine's heart appreciate. What could a Philistine know about the penitential cry, the water poured out, or the sucking-lamb offered up? Nothing. The men of this world can only take cognizance of that which lies on the surface. The outward show; the pomp and glare; the assumption of strength and greatness in the flesh, are well understood by the world. But they know nothing of the wondrous depths of a soul exercised before God. And yet, this latter is what the Christian should most earnestly seek after. An exercised soul is most precious in the sight of God; He can dwell with such, at all times. Let us not assume to be anything, but simply take our proper place in the sight of God, and He will surely be our spring of power and energy, according to the measure of our need.

“And as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel; but the LORD thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines, and discomfited them, and they were smitten before Israel” (v.10). Such were the happy results of simple dependence upon the God of the armies of Israel; it was somewhat like the glorious display of Jehovah's power on the shores of the Red Sea. “The LORD is a man of war,” when His people need Him, and their faith can use Him, in that character. When



Israel allowed Jehovah to fight for them, He was ever ready to appear with a drawn sword in His hand; but the glory must be *all* His own. Israel's shout of empty triumph must be hushed, in order that the roar of Jehovah's thunder may be distinctly heard; and oh, how wonderfully blessed to be silent, and let Jehovah speak! What, power in His voice! Power to bring peace to His people, and to strike terror into the hearts of His enemies. "Who shall not fear thee, O LORD, and glorify thy name?"

In 1 Samuel chapter 8, we have a very marked step towards the setting up of a king in Israel. "And it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel. . . . And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment" (vv. 1, 3). What a sad picture and how like man in every age. The apostle Paul says, "I know that after my departure shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock." Israel no sooner recover from the effects of the immorality of Eli's sons, than they are made to feel the direful effects of the avarice of Samuel's sons, and thus are they hurried along the path which ended in the rejection of Jehovah, and the setting up of Saul. "When Samuel was old, *he made* his sons judges." But this was a very different thing, indeed, from God's appointment. The faithfulness of Samuel was no guarantee for his sons; just as we find in the boasted theory of apostolic succession; what kind of successors have we seen? How far have they resembled their predecessors? Paul could say, "I have coveted no man's gold;" can the so-called successors say so? Samuel could say, "Behold, here I am! witness against me before the LORD, and before His anointed: whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I taken any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith?" But, alas! Samuel's sons



and successors could not say this; to them, “filthy lucre” was the leading spring of action.

Now, we find, in this chapter, that Israel makes this evil of Samuel’s sons the ostensible reason for asking a king. “Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways; now make us a king to judge us *like all the nations*.” Fearful declension! Israel satisfied to come down to the level of the nations around, and all because Samuel was old, and his sons covetous. The Lord is shut out. Had they looked up to Him they would have had no reason for seeking to put themselves wider the guardianship of a poor mortal like themselves. But, the Lord’s ability to guide and keep them was little thought of, in this entire scene; they cannot see beyond Samuel and his sons. If no help can be found from them, they must at once step down from their high elevation, and make themselves like the nations around them. The attitude of faith and dependence is too difficult to be long maintained; nothing but the actual sense of pressing need can keep us hanging upon God. In chapter 7 there was nothing about a king; God was all and in all to Israel on that occasion: but now it is not so; God is shut out, and a king is the all-engrossing object. We shall soon see the sad result of all this.

1 Samuel chapters 9 through 13 furnish us with the character of Saul, together with his anointing, and the opening of his rule. On this section I shall not dwell long, in this introduction, being merely desirous to call the reader’s attention to the steps that led to the setting up of a king in Israel.

Saul was emphatically, the man after Israel’s heart: he had all that the flesh could desire; “a choice young man, and a goodly; and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he; from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people.” This was all very imposing to those who could only look upon the outward appearance; but, what



a heart lay beneath this attractive exterior! Saul's whole course is marked with the deepest selfishness and pride, under the cloak of humility. When Saul hides himself, it is only that he may be brought more prominently into notice. With his heart full of the kingdom, he preserves a total silence about it to his uncle; with all his thoughts bent on the crown, he hides himself amongst the stuff; merely that he may become a more marked object, to be gazed at by the whole assembly. In fact, in every scene in which Saul moves, we recognize in him a thoroughly selfish, self-important, unsubdued man. True, the Spirit came upon him as one set apart to be an office-bearer amongst the people of God; but he was, throughout, a self-seeker, and he only used the name of God for his own ends, and the things of God as a pedestal on which to set forth his own glory. (The reader should accurately distinguish between the Holy Spirit coming; *upon* people, and the Holy Spirit dwelling: and acting in them. The statement in 1 Samuel 10:6, may present a difficulty to some minds. "The Spirit of the LORD will come *upon* thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man." This is not the Spirit producing the new birth, but merely fitting Saul to be an office-bearer. Were it regeneration, it would not merely be the Spirit coming *upon*, but acting in, a man. Saul the *office-bearer*, and Saul the *man*, are quite distinct, and this distinction must be maintained in reference to many of the characters both in the Old and New Testament Scriptures. An all-important difference is also to be observed in the operations of the Spirit previous and subsequent to Christ's resurrection.)

The scene at Gilgal is truly characteristic, and develops much of Saul's principle of action. Impatient to wait for God's time, he forces himself, and offers a burnt offering, and has to hear, from the lips of Samuel, these solemn words: "Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the



LORD thy God which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever. But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hath not kept that which the LORD commanded thee” (1 Samuel 13:13-14). This is just the sum of the matter, so far as Saul is concerned. “Thou hast done foolishly, thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD . . . thy kingdom shall not continue.” Solemn verities! Saul, the man after man’s heart, is set aside, to make room for the man after God’s heart. The children of Israel had abundant opportunity of testing the character of the man whom they had chosen to lead them forth, and fight their battles. The reed on which they had so earnestly desired to lean had broken, and was about to pierce their hand. Man’s king, alas! What was he? What; could he do? Set him in an emergency, and how does he carry himself? Bustling self-importance marks all his actions. No dignity; no holy confidence in God; no acting on the broad principles of truth. Self, self, self, and that, too, in the most solemn scenes, and while apparently acting for God and His people. Such was man’s king.

1 Samuel chapter 14 is a beautiful chapter furnishing a striking contrast between the efficacy of Israel’s expedient, and that of the old principle of simple faith in God. Saul sits beneath a pomegranate tree, a perfect display of empty pomp without one particle of real power; while his son Jonathan, acting in the spirit of faith, is made the happy instrument of working salvation for Israel. Israel, in unbelief, had asked for a king to fight their battles, and doubtless they imagined that, when blessed with a king, no enemy could stand before them; but was it so? One word in chapter 13 gives the reply: “all the people followed him trembling” (v. 7). What a change!



How different from the mighty host who, of old, had followed Joshua into the strongholds of Canaan! And yet they now had their longed-for king before them; but God was not there, and hence their trembling. Let man have the fairest; the most imposing ordinance, without the sense of God's presence, and he is weakness itself. Let him have the presence of God, in power, and nothing can resist him. Moses had, of old, done wonders with a simple rod in his hand; but now, Israel, with the man after their own heart full in their view, could do nought but tremble before their enemies. "All the people followed him trembling." How truly humiliating! "Nay; but we will have a king over us; . . . that our king may judge us, and go out before us and fight our battles." Truly "it is better to trust in the LORD, than to put confidence in princes." Jonathan proved this, most blessedly. He goes up against the Philistines in the power of that word, "There is no restraint with the LORD to save by many or by few." It was "the LORD" who filled his soul, and having Him, "many or few" made no difference. Faith is never affected by circumstances; it is either God or nothing.

And mark the change which passed on Israel's circumstances, the moment that faith begins to act amongst them. The trembling was transferred from Israel to the Philistines; "and there was a trembling in the host, in the field, and among all the people; the garrison and the spoilers, they also trembled; and the earth quaked; so it was a very great trembling" (1 Samuel 14:5). Israel's star was now decidedly in the ascendant, simply because Israel was acting upon the principle of faith. Jonathan looked not to his father Saul for deliverance, but to Jehovah. Jonathan knew that He was a man of war, and on Him he leaned for the deliverance of Israel in the day of trouble. Blessed dependence! None like it. Human ordinances perish; human resources vanish away; but "they that trust in the LORD shall



be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever.” “It was a very great trembling;” yes, for God was putting His terror into their hearts, and filling Israel with joy and triumph. Jonathan’s faith was owned of God in the establishment of those who had previously fled from the field of conflict into the mountains. Thus it is ever; we can never walk in the power of faith without giving an impetus to others, and, on the other hand, one coward heart is sufficient to deter a great many. Moreover, unbelief always drives one from the field of service or conflict, while faith, as surely, leads one into it.

But what of Saul in all this? How did he cooperate with the man of faith? He was perfectly incapable of any such action. He sat under the pomegranate tree, unable to inspire courage into the hearts of those who had chosen him to be their captain; and when he did venture to move, or rather to bustle forth, he could do nought but hinder the precious results of faith by his rashness and folly. But we must hasten on to the close of these introductory remarks.

1 Samuel chapter 15 presents us with the final testing and setting aside of man’s king. “GO, SMITE AMALEK.” This is the test that really made manifest the moral condition of Saul’s heart. Had he been right before God, his sword would never have been sheathed until the seed of Amalek had ceased to breathe. But the issue proved that Saul had too much in common with Amalek to carry out the divine will in his destruction. What had Amalek done? “Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt” (v. 2). In a word, Amalek stands before the spiritual mind as the first great obstacle to the progress of the redeemed from Egypt to Canaan; and we know what it is which fills a similar place in reference to those who now set out to follow the Lord Jesus.



Now, Saul had been just showing himself as a most decided obstacle in the way of the man of faith. Indeed, his entire course was one of hostility to the principles of God. How, then, could he destroy Amalek? Impossible. "He spared Agag." Just so. Saul and Agag suited each other but too well, nor had he power to execute the judgment of God on this great enemy of his people. And mark the ignorance and self-complacency of this unhappy man. "And Samuel came to Saul: and Saul said unto him, Blessed be thou of the LORD: *I have performed the commandment of the LORD*" (v. 13). How sad! Performed the commandment of the Lord, while *Agag*, king of the Amalekites, was yet alive! Oh, to what fearful lengths of vain delusion will one go when not walking uprightly before God! "What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in my ears?" Solemn, heart searching inquiry! In vain is recourse had to the plausible matter of "*sacrifice unto the LORD.*" Miserable resource for disobedient hearts! As if the Lord would accept a sacrifice from one walking in positive rebellion against His commandment. How many since Saul's day have sought to cover a disobedient spirit with the plausible mantle of "*sacrifice unto the LORD.*" However, Samuel's answer to Saul is of universal application, "Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry" (vv. 22-23). It matters not how costly the sacrifice may be, a single act of obedience to the voice of the Lord is infinitely more precious to Him. The Lord seeks not offerings, but obedience the subject heart and acquiescent spirit will glorify Him more than the cattle upon a thousand hills.

How important to have this great principle pressed home upon the conscience in this day, when so many are cloaking all sorts of disobedience with the word, Sacrifice, sacrifice! "To



obey is better than sacrifice.” It is far better to have the will in subjection to God than to load His altar with the costliest sacrifices. When the will is in subjection, everything else will take its due place; but for one, whose will is in rebellion against God, to talk of sacrificing to Him, is nothing but the most deadly delusion. God looks not at the amount of the sacrifice, but at the spirit from which it springs. Moreover, it will be found that all who, in Saul’s spirit, speak of sacrificing unto the Lord, have concealed beneath some selfish object, some Agag, or the best of the sheep, or something attractive to the flesh, which is more influential than the service or worship of the blessed God.

May all who read these pages seek to know the real blessedness of a will entirely subject to God, for in it will be found that blessed rest which the meek and lowly Jesus promised to all who were heavy laden. The rest which He himself found in being able to say, “I thank thee, O Father, . . . *for so it seemed good in thy sight.*” The restless, the ambitious Saul, knew not this. His will did not harmonize with God’s will in reference to Amalek. God had desired him to destroy Amalek, but his heart desired to spare something which *to him*, at least, seemed good and desirable; he was ready to carry out the will of God in reference to all that was “*vile and refuse*,” but *he* thought he might make some exceptions, as if the line of distinction between that which was “*refuse*” and that which was “*good*” was to be drawn by his judgment, and not by the unerring judgment of Him who looked at Amalek from a true point of view, and saw in Agag’s most refined delicacy nothing but what was vile and refuse. He saw in him one who, with all his delicacy, would resist Israel as strongly as ever, and this was His ground of controversy with Amalek—a ground, we may say, which Saul was perfectly unable to understand or appreciate.



The close of this chapter shows us, but too plainly, the current in which Saul's thoughts and desires were flowing. He had just heard the solemn appeal of Samuel, and the denunciations of God against him, concluded with these solemn words, "the LORD hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee, this day, and hath given it to a neighbor of thine, that is better than thou" (v. 28). These stunning words had just fallen upon his ear; yet so full was he of self, that he could say, "*honor me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people, and before Israel*" (v. 30). This was Saul. "*The people,*" said he, "spared what should have been destroyed." It was their fault, but "*honor me.*" Alas, what vanity! A heart steeped in iniquity seeking honor from his fellow-worms. Rejected of God, as an office-bearer, he clings to the thought of human honor. It seems, that provided he could maintain his place in the estimation of his people, he cared but little what God thought of him. But he was rejected of God, and the kingdom torn from him; nor did it avail him much that Samuel turned again, and stood by, while Saul went through the form of worshipping the Lord, in order that he might not forfeit his place and influence amongst his people. "Then said Samuel, Bring hither to me Agag, the king of the Amalekites; and Agag came unto him delicately. And Agag said, Surely the bitterness of death is past. And Samuel said, As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women. *And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the LORD in Gilgal*" (vv. 32–33). Agag's delicacy could not deceive one who was taught of God. How remarkable to find him hewing Agag in pieces *at Gilgal!* Gilgal was, the place where the reproach of Egypt was rolled away from Israel; and, in tracing their history, we find it associated with much power over evil. Here it was, then, that this Amalekite came to his end by the hand of righteous Samuel. This is most instructive. When the soul is



blessed with the realization of its full deliverance from Egypt, by the power of death and resurrection, it is in the best position for obtaining victory over evil. Had Saul known anything of the spirit and principle of Gilgal, he would not have spared Agag. He was ready enough to go there to “renew the kingdom,” but by no means to crush and set aside all that savored of the flesh. But Samuel, acting in the energy of the spirit of God, dealt with Agag according to the principles of truth; for it is written, “the LORD hath sworn that the LORD will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.”

The king of Israel ought to have known this.

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF DAVID



The Life and Times of David, King of Israel, C. H. MacKintosh provides an accurate, historical account of how God brought a harvest of blessing to His people in spite of their evil and folly.

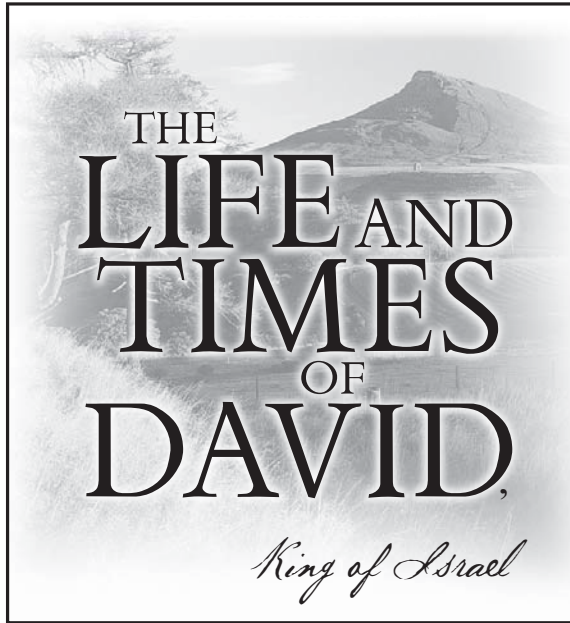
King Saul, the people's choice, had been weighed in the balance and found wanting. His kingdom would pass to David, a man after God's own heart, and the result would be glory to God and security to His people.

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You will be asked to write in the letter of the correct answer at the space on the right. Here is an example:

The color of grass is

- A. blue C. yellow
B. green D. orange

 B

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

Questions headed this way are designed to help you express your ideas and feelings. They will help you to apply the principles and concepts in this course. You may freely state your own opinions in answer to such questions.

RETURNING THE EXAM

See the back of this exam booklet for instructions on returning your exam for grading.

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STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS

Course Components

This exam booklet should be used in conjunction with the book *The Life and Times of David, King of Israel* by C. H. MacKintosh, published by ECS Ministries © 2004.

How To Study

There are ten exams, and each exam relates to one or more chapters of the book *The Life and Times of David, King of Israel*. Begin by asking God to help you understand the material. Read the chapters through at least twice, once to get a general idea of the contents and then again, slowly, looking up any Bible references given.

Begin studying immediately, or if you are in a group, as soon as the group begins. We suggest that you keep a regular schedule by trying to complete at least one exam per week.

Lesson Titles

Exam

Introduction (pages 13-36)	1
David Anointed (pages 37-45)	2
The Valley of Elah (pages 47-66)	3
The Cave of Adullam (pages 67-82)	4
Nabal and Abigail (pages 83-96)	5
Ziklag (pages 97-113)	6
The Return of the Ark (pages 115-127)	7
David's House and the House of God (pages 129-145)	8
The Conspiracy (pages 147-168)	9
The Son and Last Words (pages 169-181)	10

LESSON 1 EXAM

INTRODUCTION

EXAM GRADE

Before starting this exam, write your name and address on the front of this Exam Booklet.

Directions: Read each question carefully and write the letter of the correct answer in the blank space on the right. Use the separate answer sheet if provided.

1. The steps which led to the desire for a king in Israel are easily traced by those who have studied
 - A. the military history of Israel
 - B. the history of the human heart
 - C. the history of the Philistines
 - D. the history of the ancient world_____

2. Israel's spiritual condition is illustrated in 1 Samuel by
 - A. the household of Elkanah
 - B. the wars they fought
 - C. their relationship with surrounding nations
 - D. the life of Samuel_____

3. Hannah was motivated to ask for a son
 - A. to wipe away her own reproach
 - B. to provide a faithful priest for Israel
 - C. to gain revenge against her rival
 - D. both A and B_____

4. The statement, "Whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap," applies to

A. only unbelievers	C. only Israelites
B. only believers	D. all people

5. Israel's attitude toward _____ revealed their spiritual condition.
 - A. the war with the Philistines
 - B. the death of Eli
 - C. the Ark of the Covenant
 - D. the birth of Samuel_____

- 6. The author terms “Satan’s masterpiece” of deception as
 - A. “the amalgamation of things apparently Christian with things decidedly unholy”
 - B. “the infiltration of false teachers into the church”
 - C. “the blinding of minds toward the gospel”
 - D. “the sowing of the idea that good works are necessary for salvation”

- 7. The Israelites asked Samuel to give them a king because
 - A. he was old and about to die
 - B. the Lord had rejected them
 - C. they wanted to be like all the other nations
 - D. they had decided Saul was a good leader

- 8. King Saul was
 - A. a man after God’s heart
 - B. a man after Israel’s heart
 - C. a man who brought spiritual revival
 - D. a great military leader

- 9. Saul lost the kingdom when he
 - A. hid from Samuel
 - B. lost the battle with the Philistines
 - C. offered a burnt offering at Gilgal
 - D. refused to fight the Amalakites

- 10. Samuel told Saul that the Lord desires _____ more than sacrifices.

A. worship	C. obedience
B. faith	D. compassion

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

Trace the progressive downfall of Israel’s spiritual condition that led them to demand a king.
